



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

HALLFIELD SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Hallfield School

Full Name of School	Hallfield School
DfE Number	330/6004
EYFS Number	257164
Registered Charity Number	528956
Address	Hallfield School Church Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B15 3SJ England
Telephone Number	0121 454 1496
Fax Number	0121 454 9182
Email Address	office@hallfieldschool.co.uk
Head	Mr Roger Outwin-Flinders
Chair of Governors	Mr Keith Uff
Age Range	0 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	571
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (335 boys; 236 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-1 (EYFS): 46 5-11: 343 2-5 (EYFS): 182
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Anne Oliver
EYFS Gender	Boys and Girls
Inspection Dates	09 Feb to 10 Feb 2016

PREFACE

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) Regulations 2014. 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.

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 of the EYFS was in February 2013.

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 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

Mr Chris Manville Early Years Lead Inspector

Miss Jenifer Hillman Team Inspector for Early Years (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Hallfield School is a co-educational day school for pupils from the age of 3 months to 11 years. Founded in 1879, originally as a Church of England school for boys, the school has occupied its 20-acre site in Edgbaston since 1936. The school became co-educational in 1995. It operates through the Hallfield School Trust, a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The trust is governed by a board of 12 governors. The operation of Hallfield School is the only function of the trust.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a secure, stimulating and happy environment, whilst developing the talents of all pupils to their full potential, and to educate for excellence in academic, sporting, cultural, social and personal development. It seeks to promote the ideals of community and good citizenship, and to promote Christian values whilst taking account of other different faiths.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection in February 2013, a new head of early years has been appointed. Reception classrooms have been extended and a covered outdoor classroom added. Medical facilities and food preparation areas have been relocated to be closer to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision.
- 1.4 The school has an all-year-round day Nursery on site, which caters for children up to the age of two within its own building and garden. Classes for children over the age of two are located within the main school campus, and operate during term times, with additional holiday activities and wraparound care offered outside the published school day.
- 1.5 There are currently 571 pupils on roll: 335 boys and 236 girls. In the EYFS there are 228 children, of whom 46 are under the age of two. Of these EYFS children, 75 attend on a part-time basis for a minimum of three days a week. The school reflects the diverse community of the surrounding area and includes pupils of differing faiths and cultural traditions. Within the EYFS, the school has identified nine children as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), eight of whom receive additional support. None has an education, health and care plan (EHC). No children require support for English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.6 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
Hallfield First	Nursery (0 to 2 years)
Transition	Nursery (2 to 3 years)
Foundation	Nursery (3 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) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure more able children are appropriately challenged at all times.
 2. Develop the use of open-ended questioning to stimulate and extend children's learning.
 3. Ensure governors have a secure knowledge and understanding of the EYFS so they are able to monitor and challenge senior managers rigorously.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

3.(a) Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 3.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 3.2 Children make excellent progress in relation to their individual starting points and capabilities. By the age of two children are making strong progress and reach expected levels of development for their age, due to the personal, sensitive care they receive. By the end of the EYFS almost all children reach or exceed the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and development.
- 3.3 Careful planning, based on detailed observations, reflects children's individual needs and interests. Individual targets ensure provision supports all children, including those with SEND or EAL, allowing them to make good progress. Daily challenges provide children with additional choices, but do not always sufficiently extend the most able.
- 3.4 Children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly well supported by caring staff who help children to feel safe, secure and happy. For the under-twos, key people work closely with parents to meet children's needs. For older children, consistent role-modelling by staff and gentle reinforcement of positive behaviour result in kind, considerate and co-operative children who are eager to help others. The weekly 'golden rule' badge, awarded to the child who has followed the rules most closely, is greatly cherished.
- 3.5 Senior managers take their responsibilities for safeguarding children extremely seriously and take all appropriate steps to ensure compliance with the regulatory requirements. All staff share an understanding of this responsibility and are well trained to identify and report any concerns. Governors review policies relating to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, but have not always been sufficiently robust in monitoring and challenging school leaders.
- 3.6 Recent appointments to the senior management team have had a significant impact on the quality of the provision. Self-evaluation is highly effective in identifying areas for improvement and there is a shared vision for continued development. The setting has successfully addressed the recommendations from the previous report. Monitoring and evaluation systems have been reviewed and now cover all aspects of the provision; the introduction of challenge areas has increased the opportunity for investigation and problem-solving. The setting is exceptionally well placed for continued improvement.

3.(b) Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 3.7 The effectiveness of leadership and management within the EYFS is outstanding.
- 3.8 Recent senior appointments have had an immediate and very positive impact on the quality of the provision. A wide-ranging audit of policies and practice has resulted in an ambitious programme of improvement, much of which has already been implemented. Governors have been instrumental in supporting these changes, although at times lack sufficient knowledge to assess the impact on outcomes for children.

- 3.9 Expectations for children's achievements are high and these are reflected in the high proportion of children, including those with SEND and/or EAL, achieving at or above expected levels for their age.
- 3.10 Staff throughout the setting feel extremely well supported in their roles, with many having additional responsibilities such as deputy safeguarding lead, head of year group and first aid lead. Ongoing professional development is actively promoted through highly effective systems for supervision and performance management. Staff actively seek out training opportunities which will benefit the setting as a whole.
- 3.11 Self-evaluation is excellent, driven by the culture of reflective practice instilled by senior managers. Occasional parental surveys and a suggestion box provide opportunities for parents to share their views. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most parents who responded expressed satisfaction with the way the school handles their concerns, and the opportunities to be involved in aspects of the school's work. Every parent who responded agreed that the school is well led and managed and that they would recommend the school to others.
- 3.12 At all stages, children's needs and interests are exceptionally well met through the provision of plentiful, high quality resources. Senior managers carefully monitor the broad and balanced curriculum to ensure comprehensive coverage of all areas of learning and development, providing a secure basis for future learning. The curriculum is further enhanced through specialist provision for French and music, and a range of after-school clubs, such as football in conjunction with a local premiership club. Significant investment in resources for outdoor learning has resulted in excellent opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom for all children, including the very youngest.
- 3.13 Staff regularly meet to discuss and formulate planning based on detailed observations, and a secure knowledge of how children learn. As a result children's needs and interests are effectively provided for in order to narrow gaps in outcomes for different groups. Themes provide a meaningful context to children's learning, and are used effectively to promote equality and diversity. For example, during the inspection, Chinese New Year was used most effectively to provide opportunities for mathematics, literacy, music and role-play. Children are encouraged to be independent, active learners, which prepares them extremely well for the next stage in their learning.
- 3.14 Staff actively promote British values, preparing children to play a full role in the wider society. In Reception, children elect a representative for the school council, developing an understanding of democracy, and in assembly they learn about traditions such as Pancake Day.
- 3.15 The school meets all the statutory requirements for promoting children's welfare, safeguarding and preventing radicalisation, bullying and discrimination. Staff are appropriately trained to recognise and report any concerns, and comprehensive records are securely kept. All required checks are completed and recorded prior to the appointment of new staff.

3.(c) Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 3.16 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the EYFS is outstanding.
- 3.17 Throughout the EYFS, teachers and practitioners have high expectations for all children, including those with SEND or EAL. Staff demonstrate a good, and often, excellent understanding of how children learn. As a result, most planning accurately reflects the children's needs, and stimulates high levels of engagement. In the best examples, excellent questioning extends children's learning and promotes critical and creative thinking, but this is less evident in some areas. Staff encourage exploration as they play alongside under-twos at the water tray, and support the language development of two year olds through stories and small world play. For older children, cameras and computers are often incorporated into literacy and mathematical activities to enhance children's confidence and familiarity of information and communication technology.
- 3.18 Continuous assessment and careful tracking ensure staff readily identify children who are falling behind, and put appropriate support in place. Termly targets provide individual goals for each child, ensuring all achieve well, although targets for more able children do not always reflect their potential.
- 3.19 Staff actively encourage children's learning through positive reinforcement and recognition of their efforts. As a result, children become confident, independent learners.
- 3.20 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and in conversation with inspectors, a few parents indicated that they would like more information on children's progress, and more opportunities to participate and share in their child's learning. Inspectors found that the setting has begun to introduce more opportunities for parents to be included, but these have not yet been fully embedded. Regular, comprehensive reports and parents' evenings keep parents well informed about children's progress in relation to their age. Clear indications are given as to what children need to do to make further progress.
- 3.21 The setting is particularly successful in promoting equality and celebrating diversity. This is fully reflected in the choice of resources, the use of a wide variety of languages in posters, signs and storybooks, and the celebration of festivals from a multitude of cultures.
- 3.22 Children of all ages are very well prepared for the next stages in their learning as they become confident, independent learners within this supportive and stimulating setting.

3.(d) Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 3.23 Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding.
- 3.24 A calm, purposeful atmosphere pervades all areas of the EYFS setting as staff praise and reinforce good behaviour and effort. The supportive, caring environment and strong focus on child-initiated activities promote self-awareness and self-confidence from a very young age. As a result, children are keen to try new experiences and approach challenge with enthusiasm.
- 3.25 Children clearly enjoy their learning, expressing their ideas imaginatively through the rich array of available resources. For example, under-twos explore sound with

shakers and bells, while two year olds develop shared stories in the role-play area. In Reception, children design and build original creations such as a 'volcano torch' from a cardboard tube and shredded paper.

- 3.26 Children are well prepared for transitions within and beyond the EYFS. Children visit their new classroom prior to 'moving-up' and younger children are given a book of photographs to introduce their new teacher and provide emotional security.
- 3.27 Strong, secure relationships between adults and children develop rapidly due to the well-managed key person system that ensures every child feels valued as an individual. Personalised care routines, discussed and agreed with parents at the time of entry, help to ensure that children's physical and emotional health and well-being is sensitively promoted. However, there is currently no formal process for parents to provide updated information about children's personal needs.
- 3.28 Secure procedures for recording and monitoring attendance ensure any unexpected absences are promptly and effectively investigated.
- 3.29 A consistent approach to promoting positive behaviour and well-understood golden rules help children develop kindness and consideration for others. Children demonstrate an understanding of behaving in ways that are safe as they use equipment in the playground, and guidance is given on the safe use of computers.
- 3.30 The varied and wholesome lunches, often linked to festivals and celebration days, are greatly enjoyed by the children, and help them to develop an understanding of healthy eating. A few parents expressed the view that, due to the early timing of lunch, children sometimes get hungry during the afternoon. This view was shared by inspectors. Children are encouraged to develop independence in their personal hygiene and understand from a young age that germs make them ill. Daily opportunities to play outside, with a range of equipment, together with weekly physical development sessions in the sports hall, promote a positive attitude to exercise and a healthy lifestyle.
- 3.31 The setting makes excellent provision for children's personal development and the promotion of characteristic British values such as tolerance, individual liberty and democracy.

3.(e) Outcomes for children

- 3.32 Outcomes for children are outstanding.
- 3.33 Throughout the EYFS all children make at least good and often outstanding progress in relation to their individual starting points and capabilities. Comprehensive assessment and tracking of the children's learning ensures that any who are falling behind are quickly identified and appropriate steps taken to narrow gaps in outcomes between different groups of children. Support for those with SEND or EAL ensures these children achieve well. More able children make good progress, but are not always sufficiently challenged to progress further.
- 3.34 Children reach the expected level of development for their age at all stages throughout the EYFS due to the highly stimulating environment and well-planned activities that accurately match their needs and interests.
- 3.35 Under-twos progress well in the prime areas of physical, communication and language, and social and emotional development as they enjoy water play, sing

songs and listen to stories, imaginatively read by their carers. Independence and social skills, such as sharing and turn-taking, develop early due to the sensitive guidance provided by staff.

- 3.36 From the age of two, children continue to make excellent progress in these areas through an excellent balance of adult-led and self-directed activities. Progress checks indicate children achieve very well within the areas of physical, communication and language, and social and emotional development by the age of three.
- 3.37 Older children develop secure literacy skills due to the strong emphasis on this area. In Reception, children use their skills in identifying letters and the sounds they make successfully to read unfamiliar words, and write simple sentences in response to favourite stories. In mathematics, they develop a secure understanding of single, two- and three-digit numbers, and can count to 100. Some can double numbers such as 30 and 40. Children use information and communication technology with confidence as they regularly use cameras and computers within lessons.
- 3.38 Throughout the EYFS, children are encouraged to be independent: they choose their own pudding at lunch, put on their own coats and are encouraged to take their shoes off for sleep time. By the end of the EYFS, almost all children reach, and sometimes exceed, the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and development. As a result, they are particularly well prepared for the next stage of their education.