



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ST ANDREW'S SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Andrew's School

Full Name of School/College	St Andrew's School
DfE Number	822/6006
EYFS Number	EY389096
Registered Charity Number	307531
Address	St Andrew's School 78 Kimbolton Road Bedford Bedfordshire MK40 2PA
Telephone Number	01234 267272
Fax Number	01234 355105
Email Address	standrews@standrewsschoolbedford.com
Head	Mrs Hilary Ryan
Chair of Governors	Mr Graham Bates
Age Range	0 to 16
Total Number of Pupils	254
Gender of Pupils	Girls
Numbers by Age	0-1 (EYFS): 61 5-11: 64 2-5 (EYFS): 52 11-16: 77
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Emma Niro
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	01 Mar 2016 to 02 Mar 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 March 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 the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Linda Donowho Early Years Lead Inspector

Mrs Cheryl Macnair Team Inspector for Early Years (Head, ISA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Andrew's School is located in central Bedford and occupies three Victorian houses which have seen various additions to meet its needs. The school was founded in 1984 as a boarding school for girls and is now a day school for girls aged from six weeks to sixteen years, and for boys from six weeks to seven years. The school's Nursery offers full day care from the age of six weeks and is open each weekday throughout the year from 7.30 am to 6.30 pm. The school is a charitable trust run by a board of governors and has recently entered into a federation with Rushmoor School.
- 1.2 The aim of the school is to provide an environment in which every pupil can acquire the knowledge, wisdom and self-discipline appropriate for lifelong learning, employment and adult life. The school strives to provide a nurturing environment in which each pupil's talents are found and encouraged. It seeks for each pupil's individuality to be highly valued, fostered and developed.
- 1.3 The school has a total of 254 pupils. A total of 113 children comprise the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), of whom 14 are in Reception and the remainder are in the Nursery which consists of Babies, Toddlers and Pre-School sections. The junior school, for Years 1 to 6, comprises of 64 pupils of whom 7 are boys. The all-girls senior school has 77 pupils. A total of 62 pupils are identified by the school as having special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND), with 39 receiving additional support. English as spoken as an additional language (EAL) by 11 pupils, none of whom require specialist support. Pupils come from Bedford and the surrounding areas, and represent a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds reflecting the local community.
- 1.4 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
Babies	Nursery (0-2 years)
Toddlers	Nursery (2-3 years)
Pre-School	Nursery (3-4 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) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. For Reception children, provide more opportunities for independent exploration and investigation both indoors and out in order to further challenge their thinking and problem-solving skills.

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 year provision is outstanding.
- 3.2 The setting is highly successful in its aim to be a school that values the individual whilst developing a community within a safe and peaceful environment. The provision for children's individual needs, learning and care is excellent. Children make excellent progress in their learning and development from their starting points and are prepared extremely well for the next stages of their education. They demonstrate excellent levels of personal development and curiosity, showing a clear sense of well-being and happiness. This adds much to children's social development. On a day-to-day basis, key people ensure that safeguarding and welfare procedures are rigorously adhered to and that the health and safety of children are at the forefront of everyday practice. Leadership and management have developed highly effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the setting. Formal and informal meetings ensure that children's welfare and progress are a constant focus. All staff have been involved in the development of the EYFS and they are regularly encouraged to discuss, reflect and review their practice.

3.(b) Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 3.3 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.
- 3.4 The governors have direct and particularly effective involvement in the setting. The governor with specific responsibility for the EYFS regularly visits the setting to meet with the leadership and observe lessons. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are met and implemented rigorously including those regarding the prevention of extremism and radicalisation. This creates a caring and safe environment which strongly promotes the welfare of children. All records, policies and procedures for the safe and efficient management of the setting are implemented. Risk assessments are in place for all areas of the setting and the school grounds, and for trips and visits.
- 3.5 Managers have a strong vision for the EYFS which is centred on rigorous self-evaluation and underpinned by excellent knowledge of how young children learn and of the principles of the EYFS practice. Practitioners work successfully together as a dedicated team, evaluating their practice and ensuring continuous improvement. A strong ethos of reflective practice is present, and staff constantly seek ways to improve the provision by clearly identifying targets for further development through regular staff meetings and informal discussion.
- 3.6 The EYFS staff members are supervised well, with regular meetings taking place between staff and their line manager. Regular observations, meetings and reviews augment this process and provide staff valuable opportunities to discuss their practice. The thorough annual appraisal system enables them to improve and reflect on their practice whilst identifying areas for professional development. Close contact with the local authority ensures that staff regularly access training. Induction procedures are excellent with all staff receiving the required information and training in order for them to undertake their role.

- 3.7 Staff prepare a programme of activities that is highly effective in promoting the development for each age and stage of the children in their care. The youngest children's learning is centred on physical, personal, social and emotional development, as well as language and communication. The curriculum develops as the children get older, successfully covering all seven areas of learning through an effective balance of activities both indoors and out. At all ages, children are thoroughly prepared for their next stages of learning.
- 3.8 Children with SEND or EAL are ably supported by knowledgeable staff, who provide appropriate support and intervention. Staff work closely with external agencies and health professionals where necessary in order to meet specific needs. The progress of children is carefully tracked across the EYFS, and staff consistently use this information to plan children's future learning. Children's interests are central to the planning process and are always carefully taken into consideration. Parents are actively encouraged to share in this planning, frequently communicating their children's interests and experiences.
- 3.9 The school values the views of parents and regularly seeks their views, using this information to improve their provision. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly happy with all aspects of the provision, and those spoken to during the inspection were equally positive with regard to all aspects of the setting.
- 3.10 Staff are positive role models and actively promote good behaviour. High expectations and a strong focus on respect and consideration for others actively promote equality and diversity, and the values of British society. This significantly impacts on children's behaviour and attitudes.

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

- 3.11 The staff know the children extremely well. They are knowledgeable and plan a broad, balanced and exciting programme of activities to help children of all ages and abilities achieve. Staff consistently have high expectations for children's learning and they use a well-balanced range of child-initiated and adult-led activities that carefully reflect children's interests and ensure that they are excited to learn.
- 3.12 Throughout the setting, planning is responsive to children's needs. Careful observations provide staff the knowledge and understanding to build on what children already know and can achieve, and each child's next steps are precisely identified.
- 3.13 Key staff carefully build the children's confidence at every stage. Both older and younger children are well supported in acquiring effective learning habits and skills. The contributions made by parents are highly valued and staff regularly seek their views. Parents are regularly informed of focused activities, and a strong partnership is in evidence. All staff are alert to any sign that a child may not be making expected progress, and additional support is provided for those with SEND or EAL. All children reach at least the expected levels of development and the most able children exceed the nationally expected levels. Staff are highly skilled in talking to and questioning children to encourage their thinking skills and help them discover new ways to solve problems. All staff interact extremely well with the children and display a caring and positive attitude, talking to children at their own level across the setting. Positive praise is used in abundance, ensuring that children are very well supported in their learning. In the Nursery, both the indoor and outdoor

environments are used highly effectively and contain a wide range of resources to promote play and exploration. Babies, for example, enjoy playing in the covered outdoor area which was apparent from their response to and their engagement with the various resources. They develop well from their starting points. All children display confidence, and comfortably babble and chat amongst themselves and to familiar and unfamiliar adults. Toddlers frequently join Babies in the outdoor area and are encouraged to explore, construct and apply their imagination using the wide range of resources, which they do so with great enthusiasm. Pre-School children have many opportunities to use their imaginations and develop confidence. They enjoyed blowing and chasing bubbles in the outdoor area, and observing their colours and sudden disappearance. Reception children have a wide range of opportunities for learning which they all enjoy, however opportunities for investigation and independent organisation of their activities are weak.

- 3.14 Opportunities to discuss progress or any issues with staff are plentiful throughout the setting. The school recognises the importance of including parents in children's learning and uses email newsletters, curriculum meetings and regular formal meetings to communicate information to them. Regular informal meetings when parents drop off and collect their children are an extremely significant part of the communication arrangements and add much to the shared approach to learning. Parents receive regular, detailed summative reports which contain useful information on children's progress. These are in addition to the progress checks completed at the age of two and the EYFS Profile; both of which are shared with parents during meetings.
- 3.15 Equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity are strongly promoted. Children are taught about the wider world, and festivals such as Chinese New Year and Diwali are celebrated. Respect for one another and an appreciation of differences is promoted well by staff, and children display clear respect for others in their play and discussions.

3.(d) Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 3.16 Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding.
- 3.17 Staff afford high priority to providing a warm, caring environment where trust and loving relationships ensure that the children are happy, confident and safe. From an early age children are encouraged to share and consider the opinions of others, so helping them to become prepared for life in Britain.
- 3.18 Children settle quickly and develop a close and affectionate relationship with key staff due to the sensitive and personal care that they receive. The school's practice of home visits from the key member of staff before children join the setting ensures that strong relationships with both parents and children are firmly established. Children are happy and motivated to learn and ably supported by adults, who know them well.
- 3.19 Children of all ages co-operate and share. They display thoughtfulness for others and demonstrate an awareness of behaving safely. Children feel secure and happy due to the individual care provided by attentive staff, who are vigilant in their care of the children and help them to develop safe and healthy habits. Toddlers develop good hygiene practices by washing their hands and putting on an apron before lunch, and these good habits continue throughout the EYFS. Staff consistently

provide support to children regarding keeping safe, which includes guidance on computer safety.

- 3.20 The well-resourced environment enables the younger children to be comfortable both indoors and out, developing confidence, independence and curiosity. The organisation of the indoor and outdoor environments for older children is equally as stimulating and offers many opportunities for imaginative play and discovery. All children are physically active and many opportunities are provided to develop their skills.
- 3.21 Children are frequently asked for their opinions and ideas, and happily respond with growing confidence. They enjoy having responsibilities such as clearing away their plates and cutlery at lunchtime, helping to set the table at snack time and assuming the role of leader in the line. Children's independence is encouraged such as in changing their shoes and putting on their coats to go outside, and they all understand the need to work together to tidy away their games and toys. All this adds to their self-esteem. Across the setting, children demonstrate determination and perseverance when completing a task. They keenly follow instructions and are highly responsive to adults and each other.
- 3.22 Reception children attend assemblies and join the older children at play times. Pre-School children are provided the choice as to whether they join the Reception children or play separately, so providing them with the opportunity to be part of the larger community. Attendance registers are carefully monitored. Key people ensure that children move seamlessly through the Nursery stages and into Reception.

3.(e) Outcomes for children

- 3.23 Outcomes for the children are outstanding.
- 3.24 Children thoroughly enjoy their learning, and outcomes for children including those with SEND and EAL are outstanding. High priority is held in ensuring the needs of every child are fully met. Children are happy throughout the setting, form close relationships with adults, and are serious and confident learners. They clearly enjoy their time at school and participate enthusiastically in the full range of activities.
- 3.25 Throughout the EYFS, children are active learners who initiate activities and explore their ideas creatively through purposeful play and exploration. Children in Pre-School experimented with paints, mixing colours and excitedly discussing the observed results. Babies helped make flour dough and were fascinated by the textures and changes. Toddlers were equally as excited as they experienced the tactile qualities of corn flour paste. Reception children initiate activities, but they are provided with fewer opportunities for independent exploration to challenge their thinking and imagination. Children enter the Nursery with a wide range of attainment and make rapid progress. This is partly due to the high ratio of staff but also as a result of the skilful way in which staff talk to children, asking open questions and modelling excellent language.
- 3.26 By the end of Reception, the vast majority of children attain all the Early Learning Goals and many work beyond. Those children who need additional support have this appropriately provided by experienced staff and outside help when required.
- 3.27 Younger children gain in confidence, and as their language develops they begin to enthusiastically communicate with each other and unfamiliar adults. They demonstrate a growing repertoire of songs and rhymes which are central to many of

their activities. Circle time registration often includes singing and action rhymes. In the baby room, staff regularly sing to children and often do so in a different language to stimulate their interest. Older Nursery children are increasingly articulate and enjoy involving others, including adults, in their conversations and play.

- 3.28 Across the EYFS, children delight in books and stories. Nursery children begin to recognise letters and sounds, and Reception children adeptly use their secure phonic knowledge to begin to read and write. Reception children also take a keen interest in using their extremely wide knowledge of phonics to read simple texts and they start to write short sentences.
- 3.29 Understanding and recognising numbers is an integral part of school life beginning in the Nursery, and staff regularly use activities and opportunities to reinforce this. Activities such as counting everyday objects and the stepping stones outside reinforce this growing understanding. Older Nursery children can recognise and start to order numbers to 10 and beyond. Reception children add and subtract within 20 and recognise numbers to 100. They develop a secure understanding of mathematical concepts such as shape, measure and time, and solve simple problems. They use their understanding of money to 'buy' their snacks each day. Staff take great care to ensure that children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.