

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION
ST EDWARD'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL

MARCH 2017



School's details

School	St Edward's Preparatory School			
DfE Number	916/6077			
EYFS Number	EY309807			
Registered charity number	293360			
Address	St Edward's Preparatory School London Road Charlton Kings Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL52 6NR			
Telephone number	01242 538900			
Email address	mainoffice@stedwardsprep.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Stephen McKernan			
Chair of trustees	Dr Susan Honeywill			
Age range	1 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	300			
	Boys	157	Girls	143
	EYFS	80	Juniors	220
Pupils' ability	Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average.			
Pupils' needs	The number of pupils identified by the school as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is thirty-seven. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. They mainly require support with cognition and learning. Sixteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL); two receive support for this aspect of their learning.			
History of the school	The school was established as the junior school to St Edward's School in 1995. Now known as St Edward's Preparatory School, it occupies its own 45-acre site on the edge of Cheltenham.			

Ownership and governing structure	The school is governed by St Edward's School Trust (Cheltenham). This also oversees the senior school, which occupies a separate site about two miles away. Each school operates as a separate entity with its own head, but the schools have a joint financial organisation.
School structure	The school is divided into three sections: the Nursery which accommodates children aged one and two; the pre-prep comprising pupils aged three to seven; and the prep department for those aged eight to eleven.
Other useful information	The school is a Catholic foundation, welcoming pupils of all faiths and none.
Inspection dates	01 to 02 March 2017

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. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or 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 following their inspection 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 and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

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.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

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

The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

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.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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.

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

The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.

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

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical 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.

The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6

Provision of information

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 those 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.

The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

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.

The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.

The early years provision meets the needs of all the children extremely well, including those with particular needs. It successfully provides a high-quality learning environment in which all children thrive and enjoy their learning. Responding to the individual needs and particular interests of children is central to the planning of high-quality experiences which promote engagement and enjoyment. This success is due to inspirational leadership and a strong, highly skilled team who are committed to ensuring that the children are happy and enjoy their learning.

All children progress strongly relative to their starting points. The focus on the development of children's confidence to explore and investigate encourages creativity, collaboration and engagement. Emphasis on the individual needs of each child and the recognition of their unique perspectives on the world ensure that the learning and care provided is matched to their needs, and leads to rapid progression in their development. Children with particular needs are identified at an early stage and monitored closely. Interventions to support their progress are evaluated regularly. Close links with parents are integral to the success of the setting. The excellent personal and social development of children is due to the staff's very detailed knowledge of them, the warm and supportive environment and a clear understanding of the expected stages of development of children of this age.

The requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare are fully met. All staff have up-to-date safeguarding training and are aware of their responsibilities in ensuring the safety of children. They also have paediatric first-aid training.

A culture of reflective practice and a commitment to continuous improvement is evident throughout the setting. Leaders motivate all staff to become fully involved and to work together to provide children the best possible early learning experience.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.

This is due to the clear vision of the leadership, the continual evaluation of the impact of provision, and the support provided by the wider leadership and the trustees of the school.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) leaders are united in their commitment to achieving excellent outcomes for children. They operate an open-door approach and support staff through a rigorous annual appraisal, appropriate supervision arrangements and regular staff meetings. Weekly meetings to evaluate the impact of curriculum planning lead to the effective identification of the next steps in children's learning.

All staff are well qualified, highly motivated and supported in their continued professional development. They work extremely well together, constantly sharing best practice. Staff are actively involved in determining the future direction of the setting and constantly strive to ensure that the children have the best possible learning experience. All rooms provide a secure, highly stimulating and age-appropriate environment. The school has recognised that to further enhance provision, it would be beneficial to develop the small outdoor area outside the 'baby rooms' and increase the existing outdoor learning programme by introducing additional woodland learning opportunities.

The active promotion of the values inherent in British society is a significant part of the children's personal social and emotional development. These are integrated into the curriculum, focusing on aspects such as good manners, sharing and a mutual respect for one another. Planning reflects the recognition of the uniqueness of each child, as their interests are taken into account. A clear behaviour policy gives guidance on the high standards of behaviour that are expected, and such standards are reflected in the conduct of the children throughout the setting. Safeguarding is afforded a high priority.

Parents' questionnaire responses indicate that they are highly appreciative of the high standards of care and the importance placed on knowing the children extremely well, to ensure that they feel secure and enjoy their time in the setting. Parents are welcome into the setting at any time to talk to the staff, and a suggestion box and home-to-school diaries provide opportunities for parents to comment upon aspects of the provision.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.

High expectations are evident in the challenging targets set for children, arising from day-to-day assessment and each key person's detailed knowledge and understanding of their children. Careful planning ensures that children are provided with activities and experiences which help them to make strong progress. The well-qualified learning support staff help the identification of children with particular needs and they monitor their development closely. High expectations of children's ability to develop their motor skills was evident in the encouragement provided to young children on the outdoor balancing bar, who responded positively. The continual repetition of a hoop-rolling activity caused great delight for the very young children who were chasing it. The commentary of the teacher encouraged the children to repeat the phrase 'ready, steady, go' as the hoop was pushed along.

All staff are highly attuned to the needs of this age group. Appropriate body language, gesture and tone of voice promote confident engagement. Children exploring the sounds made by shaking bottles containing different fillings were well supported in their learning by gentle interventions which encouraged them to observe closely, investigate further and enjoy the results. High-quality interactions with children as they explored an outdoor area reflected an excellent understanding of their needs and stage of development. Children with EAL are supported effectively by focusing on strong attachments, visual cues and timetables, and by daily communication with parents.

Outstanding assessment practices are in place, based on a culture of focused and incidental observation and close tracking of children's progress in achieving the developmental milestones expected for their age. Weekly plans identify children's needs and their responses in different learning contexts. Learning support staff work closely with staff in the setting to support any children in the EYFS identified as needing additional help.

Progress is shared with parents through the open-door policy, home-to-school diaries and parental evenings. Regular reports are sent to parents, who appreciate the opportunity to discuss the content and future learning for their children at a convenient arranged time. Parents are involved in the gathering of assessment information through informal daily contact with their children's key person and the introductory talk for parents, and the EYFS handbook encourages them to document any achievements that their children make at home.

The setting places a good focus on finding out about different cultures and their important festivals and celebrations. Diwali and Chinese New Year are particularly enjoyed by the children.

An understanding of the characteristics of effective learning underpin planning, providing all the children opportunities to develop as enthusiastic and independent learners. All children's individual needs and stage of development are considered when providing them the opportunities to engage in activities to develop their skills. For example, children who do not like to get messy hands are provided protective gloves to wear when experiencing the properties of clay. Very young children who have just mastered walking display high levels of confidence and independence as they navigate the room, investigating items of interest along the way, as a result of the encouragement and support which they receive from adults.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The children's personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding.

The staff provide excellent role models, encouraging the children to listen to one another and to share toys and other resources. A very young child was encouraged to share and recognise the needs of others when she found a small ball that another baby wanted.

The secure, stimulating surroundings and excellent relationships with adults in the setting enhance children's confidence to explore their environment and investigate resources, for example a child independently selected a small trowel from the gardening tools and persevered as she tried to dig with it in the soil pit. The space available to the children indoors and outside gives them the scope to take risks in their exploration of different areas and equipment. Children display a growing awareness of personal safety. The setting has plans to increase these opportunities further.

Children exhibit emotional security as they smile, giggle and interact with the adults in the room in response to focused interactions. They respond very well to the calm and sensitive approach of the adults. Excellent communication within the setting and emphasis on children's emotional well-being ensure that they are well prepared for the transitions within the day and at the end of the year when they move into a new room. In the summer term, children have regular visits to the classroom that they will be moving to and become familiar with the new staff. They begin to understand the importance of keeping healthy through their daily routines such as handwashing, and they enjoy eating fruit snacks. Staff monitor the children's attendance closely and follow up unexplained absences.

An 'All about Me' sheet which is filled in when the child starts in the setting provides details of methods of communication used by the child such as pointing, gestures, signs, and single or multiple words, and this knowledge supports appropriate interactions and expectations, creating a sense of security in the child.

Outcomes for children

Outcomes for children are outstanding.

All children make at least good and often excellent progress. Their levels of development are assessed on entry to the setting; most of them are found to be at the expected levels of development for their age. By the end of their time in the EYFS, many of the children exceed the expectations for the this stage of education, reflecting excellent progress. Outcomes in reading are particularly strong, with most children reading above their chronological age by the end of the EYFS. The assessment programs in use clearly demonstrate children's development across the setting to be at least in line with expectation for their age, and in many cases above.

Favourable ratios, knowledgeable staff, and a focus on communication and independence ensure that children achieve high levels of progress. Very young children develop extremely good listening skills which are evident in their interactions with adults. The excellent range and quality of resources leads to children who are highly motivated to explore and investigate, and therefore develop well as learners.

Compliance with statutory requirements

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.

- Implement current plans to increase children's opportunities to investigate, play and explore by providing additional outdoor areas and visits to a woodland learning area.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the chair of trustees. They attended 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

Mr Richard Johnson	Reporting inspector
Mrs Clare Lynas	Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Kathryn Henry	Co-ordinating inspector for early years