



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

HIGHFIELD PRIORY SCHOOL

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

21 TO 22 JUNE 2016



School's Details

Full Name of School	Highfield Priory School
DfE Number	888/6009
EYFS Number	EY312963
Registered Charity Number	532262
Address	Highfield Priory School Fulwood Row Fulwood Preston Lancashire PR2 5RW
Telephone Number	01772 709624
Email Address	schooloffice@highfieldpriory.co.uk
Head	Jeremy Duke
Chair of Governors	Mark Goodwin
Age Range	6 months to 11 years
Total Number of Pupils	277
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (122 boys; 155 girls)
Early Years Foundation Stage	114
Pupils' Ability	Standardised tests provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above the national average.
Pupils' Needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is five. They require support with dyslexia, dyscalculia and autistic spectrum disorder. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Two pupils have English as an additional language and both receive support for their language skills.

School's Details

History of the School	Founded in 1938, Highfield Priory School moved to its current site in 1970. In 1973 the school was established as a charitable trust and limited company, which now educates children from six months to eleven years of age.
Ownership and Governing Structure	Highfield Priory School is a registered charity, administered by a board of governors.
School Structure	The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) accepts children from the age of six months to five years. The preparatory school provides for pupils aged six to eleven.
Inspection Dates	21 to 22 June 2016

About the Inspection

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.

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 concerns about quality 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 measures attainment using National Curriculum tests. In the years 2014 to 2015, the results were exceptional when compared against the national average for maintained schools.

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 pupil 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 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 – 29] 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, and its results in public examinations, 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. Across the age range, children make excellent progress from their starting points; they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, and by the end of the EYFS they are ready for school. The setting has outstanding resources, both indoors and out, which provide children with a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning opportunities. All children, including those with SEND, are very well catered for due to the fact that learning experiences are tailored to their individual needs and interests. Children display excellent personal and emotional development for their age; they are confident, happy and secure whilst in the setting. The welfare of children and keeping them safe are given the highest priority by staff, and all necessary requirements related to this area have been met. Leaders and managers reflect upon the setting's practice constantly and embrace new initiatives to make this already high quality provision even better, fully supporting children's life chances. Leaders and managers value staff; their expertise is utilised well to enhance children's experiences, such as through the creation and maintenance of the flourishing Nursery garden. This successfully meets the recommendation from the previous inspection.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding. Governors, leaders and managers are suitably ambitious and share a desire for continual improvement. Ongoing investment and high expectations help to ensure that children experience a high quality early years education. Structured systems for performance management and staff supervision are implemented which enable staff to discuss the children in their care and to reflect upon their own skills. This in turn helps to identify future training needs, which are then met. Systems to evaluate the provision are thorough, and include information from staff, parents and children. Leaders and managers act quickly upon suggestions where appropriate.

The curriculum covers the requisite areas of learning, and is enriched by an interesting range of subjects, such as French and baking, and a programme of visits and activities led by outside specialists. The learning programmes are overseen by leaders and managers to ensure that the content is appropriate and meets the needs and interests of all children. Assessment data is regularly analysed to check that children are making the necessary progress so that they are prepared for the next stage of their education; any shortfalls are quickly identified and addressed. Data from the EYFS is not currently included in the whole-school tracking system, which limits the overall analysis of progress across the whole school.

Leaders and managers take great care to ensure that the setting is fully inclusive of all children, embracing their interests, needs and different backgrounds, which ensures that all children succeed equally. Discipline is approached positively and suitably for the age of children. Staff demonstrate consistent expectations, and are excellent role models; as a result, the behaviour of children is of a high standard. The setting recognises the importance of promoting fundamental British values and this is woven into everyday experiences, and explained through activities such as assemblies and discussions. Successful measures are employed to guard against bullying.

Governors, leaders and managers are clear in their responsibilities to adhere to the statutory requirements of the EYFS, including welfare and safeguarding, and preventing radicalisation and extremism. They take this role very seriously; as a result all requirements have been met. Safeguarding arrangements are effective, with clear procedures in place to be followed should the need arise. Staff demonstrate that they have a thorough understanding of these procedures and their duties under safeguarding requirements. Through their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and during discussion, the overwhelming majority of parents voiced their satisfaction with the education and care that their children receive. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school promotes values of democracy and

respect, and is tolerant of those with different faiths and beliefs. They also agreed that the school promotes their children's welfare and actively promotes good behaviour.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Highly committed, professional staff demonstrate a strong understanding of how children learn and develop. They have high expectations, and as a result they enable children to achieve to the best of their ability. Teachers shape the learning experiences to suit the age, interest and abilities of the children, taking care to make learning fun and meaningful so that their fascination for learning grows. For example, older children's interests shape topics and role-play areas, as was seen in the preparations to change the 'flower shop' into an 'ambulance station.' Assessment is used effectively to plan for children's learning. Information gathered from parents when a child joins is put to excellent use to develop children's own interests and present appropriate challenge. Ongoing assessment is then used to help staff meet the needs of all children. Where children are not meeting age-appropriate expectations appropriate intervention is successfully put into place, enabling good levels of progress for all children. Likewise, those children who are exceeding expectations are provided with experiences that challenge and inspire them suitably. Staff interact extremely well with children; they support them in their learning expertly, knowing when to intervene and offer suggestions or praise. Their discussions help children understand how to develop, and help foster high self-esteem.

Staff liaise closely with parents to ensure that they understand how their children learn, and the approaches used in school. They work hard to engage parents in their children's learning, for example through the sharing of information in the children's online learning journals. Informal discussions, as well as formal meetings and useful reports, provide an excellent range of opportunities for parents to learn about the progress of their children.

Staff have successfully created an inclusive environment, where all children have access to the wide range of high quality, interesting resources. These include resources such as books and artefacts that celebrate diversity. Care is taken to include items that have specific meaning to individual children and their diverse backgrounds. All children benefit from having access to an excellent outdoor environment with a variety of creative resources that promote problem solving and present appropriate challenge. This was put to good effect when children aged two resolved problems collaboratively using a range of construction materials to produce a den.

Across the setting, high quality teaching is evident. Staff seize upon opportunities to engage the children's interest and build upon children's skills, as was seen when the youngest children's interest in a paint activity was enhanced by the introduction of paintbrushes to further their exploration. Experiences are meaningful and well planned; as a result children are developing excellent learning skills and achieve well. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding. Children demonstrate great contentment and confidence. They approach their learning positively, and are well supported by excellent staff role models, who praise their achievements and nurture a positive approach to learning. Children clearly enjoy their learning, and demonstrate high levels of independence for their age. They are keen to explore and 'have a go', encouraged by staff, showing an awareness of how to learn effectively. Their independence and confidence lead to excellent use of imagination, as was seen when older children took great delight in pretending to be jack-in-the-boxes, using a large cardboard box.

New children are helped to settle due to a well-organised system of visits and sharing of information between parents and staff. Children are assigned a key person, who is responsible for their learning and care needs. Time is spent developing a strong relationship between the key person, child and his or her family. This helps children to feel emotionally secure, and supports their physical health and well-being as well as their academic learning. At each stage, children and their parents are fully prepared for the

transition to the next class, with the sharing of information seen as an especially important part of this process.

The setting promotes prompt and regular attendance of all children, taking swift action to investigate absence. A consistent set of behavioural expectations is embedded in the setting. Children demonstrate that they understand these expectations; they know how to make their feelings known, and are respectful of others' feelings.

Staff support children in developing important life skills to help them care for themselves. For example, children are taught how to keep safe whilst using a range of resources, including technology. They show that they understand how to manage risks well; for instance, two year olds are very aware of road safety in their outdoor play, knowing when it is safe to cross the zebra crossing. Healthy lifestyles are promoted through the provision of opportunity for regular exercise and a well-balanced diet. Topics and visiting specialists provide additional information on health issues. The children's personal, social and emotional development is a great strength; children are polite, caring, enthusiastic and happy. From an early age, they learn how to share and take turns. They are also learning to take responsibility for their own care, as was seen when a younger child decided that he was ready for his nap. These are all valuable skills that help to prepare children for life in the wider world.

Outcomes for children

The outcomes for children are outstanding. Children progress extremely well from their starting points. This includes children with SEND. The youngest children display high levels of engagement and curiosity whilst exploring their environment. They show excellent early communication skills, both with other children and adults, and demonstrate that they are physically and emotionally secure. Those aged two take great interest in activities; they communicate confidently, and display excellent skills for their age across the areas of learning, as was seen as children identified different types of flowers in the Nursery garden. The oldest children are articulate and demonstrate growing confidence whilst writing for a purpose, using correct punctuation. They understand mathematical concepts such as halves and estimation. Children across the ages display confidence with technology.

Most children reach the expected levels of development typical for their age, and where this is not the case quick intervention provides targeted help to help narrow any gaps in the child's learning. Consequently, by the end of the EYFS, the vast majority of children meet the expected levels of development and many exceed the expectations, thus preparing them extremely well for school.

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.

- Use the existing school assessment tracking system in the EYFS to provide a complete picture of assessment data and progress across the school.

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 governors. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and 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

Mrs Diane Gardiner

Reporting Inspector

Mr Anthony Hawksley

Compliance Team Inspector (Bursar, IAPS school)

Miss Jacqueline Scotney

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

Miss Angela Charlton

Team Inspector for Early Years
(Head of Junior School, GSA school)