



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BROOKLANDS PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Brooklands Preparatory School

Full Name of School/College **Brooklands Preparatory School**

DCSF Number **860/6004**

EYFS Number **EY288888**

Registered Charity Number **528616**

Address **Brooklands Preparatory School
167 Eccleshall Road
Stafford
Staffordshire
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Email Address **enquiries@brooklands.staffs.sch.uk**

Headmaster **Mr David Williams**

Chair of Governors **Robert Madders, Esq.**

Age Range **0 to 11**

Total Number of Pupils **157**

Gender of Pupils **Mixed (78 boys; 79 girls;)**

Numbers by Age 0-2 (EYFS): **40** 5-11: **76**

3-5 (EYFS): **41** 11-18: **N/A**

Head of EYFS Setting **Mrs Stephanie Keenan: Kindergarten and Reception**

Miss Emma Tipper : Little Brooklands

EYFS Gender **Mixed**

Inspection Dates **30 Nov 2009 to 01 Dec 2009**

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule* for INTERIM inspections. The inspection is a two day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in March 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

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 31st 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 Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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INSPECTION EVIDENCE

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Brooklands School aims to provide a supportive and secure family community based on Christian principles. It seeks to encourage pupils to fulfil their potential both academically and physically and to develop into reasoning and responsible citizens. It intends that pupils will learn how to live amicably together with a strong awareness of the feelings and needs of others. Links with parents are seen as essential to these aims.
- 1.2 The school is situated to the north of Stafford, one mile from the town centre. It caters for boys and girls from the age of three months to eleven years of age. Brooklands was founded in 1946 and is a registered charity, with an elected governing body, known as the school council. The school consists of two large converted Victorian houses to which several additional buildings have been added, notably the recently built science and technology block and more recently the music and drama studio. The school includes a day nursery, called Little Brooklands, for children aged between three months and three and a half years.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection the school had 157 pupils on roll, aged between three months and eleven years, of whom 55 attended part time. Little Brooklands had 40 children of whom eighteen attended full time. Of the rest, 41 were aged from three to five years, of whom twenty attended part time, and the remaining 76 were aged from five to eleven years.
- 1.4 Pupils come from a wide geographical area, from families that strongly support their children's education. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN). A further 21 have been identified as having some degree of learning difficulty or disability (LDD), of whom 14 receive specialist learning support at school, for which parents make an additional payment. Three have English as an additional language.
- 1.5 Entry to the school is not on a competitive basis and almost all who apply are offered places following an informal assessment. The pupils cover a wide spectrum of ability, though their average ability on the basis of nationally standardised measures is above the national average. Since 2006 the school has ceased to enter pupils for the national curriculum tests. At the age of eleven, approximately four-fifths of pupils continue in the independent sector and most go to their first-choice secondary school.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Little Brooklands	0-3s
Kindergarten	Nursery
Transition	Reception

Preparatory Department

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 1

Form 2	Year 2
Form 3	Year 3
Form 4	Year 4
Form 5	Year 5
Form 6	Year 6

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 Pupils of all abilities are well educated young people, because of the high quality and range of the education provided and the consistently good teaching they receive. The school fully meets its aim to provide a broadly based, dynamic and fun education where a love of learning is nurtured in all areas of school life. From an outstanding beginning in Little Brooklands, they continue to make good progress from Nursery to Year 6, so that virtually all pass their examinations into their preferred senior schools, a few with scholarships. Their high motivation to learn, their articulacy and the range and vitality of their writing are particular strengths. Their ability to use and apply mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils at all ages and abilities are attentive and intelligent learners. They are knowledgeable across the range of their curriculum, can think for themselves and are well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- 2.2 The education and achievement of pupils is greatly enriched by the range and variety of the school day, which goes well beyond the national curriculum, and by the extensive range of activities, especially sporting and expressive, together with links with the wider world and visits to museums and galleries. Virtually all pupils represent their school at some sport, and the school is very successful in matches against often much larger schools. Pupils are consistently well taught by teachers, who are well deployed to teach to their subject strengths, know their pupils well and make their lessons lively and interesting. They assess them in ways that help pupils of all abilities to improve and prepare them effectively for the next stages of their education. Assessment and tracking procedures enable teachers to understand and adapt their teaching to their pupils' individual needs effectively, though until the recently implemented standardised system works through the school, they lack a way of objectively evaluating the school as a whole. Support for both pupils with LDD and EAL is very well thought out; teachers and their assistants enable them to make good progress in their lessons.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.3 The quality of pupils' personal development is good overall. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent but the school's provision for their welfare, health and safety is uneven because, despite the good care all staff provide for their pupils, procedures for safe recruitment and some aspects of the monitoring and administration of safeguarding did not meet requirements. Pupils are fully engaged members of the "Brooklands family", equipped with excellent personal and social skills. This is evident from Little Brooklands to Year 6 in their obvious confidence and in the respect they show for the golden rules and for one another. They are reflective about their beliefs and values and understand, not least through the charitable work they undertake for schools in India, Kenya and Bulgaria, the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. They show great maturity in the way they accept responsibility for others, for example through membership of a highly effective school council, while pupils in Year 6 have obviously benefited from the leadership training they receive. Through their wider education and the life of the school they show a tolerant understanding of the diversity of culture and beliefs around them.

- 2.4 The children are happy at the school because the clear pastoral system, the dedication of staff and the variety of the curriculum ensure that they are well known and have many adults whom they would approach with a worry. Bullying is rare and appropriately dealt with when it occurs. Good training ensures that staff show a thorough understanding of how to identify and respond appropriately to any concern about pupil welfare. The designated persons have strong links with the local safeguarding board. However, the policy for safeguarding did not specify an annual review of the effectiveness of its implementation and is not supported by comprehensive procedures for safe recruitment. Teachers at all stages take pains to ensure safety within the school and in activities. A weakness in the rigour of risk assessments on some trips was identified by staff and a new, more thorough procedure has been put in place.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.5 Governance, leadership and management are uneven, with strengths in educational and pastoral leadership but important deficiencies in the management and administration of safeguarding. The school is the open family community it sets out to be and has good links with its parents, providing many opportunities for them to be engaged in the life of the school. Parents expressed positive views about the school in the inspection questionnaire.
- 2.6 The governing body, through its breadth of background and commitment to the school's ethos and its close and supportive contacts with the school, provides very effective oversight and support for finance and the quality of education and pastoral care. The clear vision of leadership and its close monitoring of the academic and pastoral provision are key contributors to the many strengths in the achievement and personal development of the pupils. Communication and lines of responsibility are mostly clear, but are insufficiently so in the lower school and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Management has been very responsive to changing circumstances and at taking opportunities to move the school forward. However, the governance and management of key areas of safeguarding, particularly in relation to safe recruitment have been seriously defective. This has been recognised and the school has set about urgently remedying the deficiencies.

3. MAIN SCHOOL: ACTION POINTS

(a) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended, with the exception of those indicated below.

Under Standard 3 (Welfare, health and safety) it must:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are at the school by updating the policies and procedures for safer recruitment and carrying out an annual review of the effectiveness with which the policies for child protection and safer recruitment are implemented [Regulation 3.(2)(b)];
- ensure that the new arrangements for risk assessing visits out of school are rigorously implemented and monitored [Regulation 3.(2)(c)]

Under Standard 4 (The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors) it must:

- ensure that all required checks on all staff, volunteers and supply or contract staff are completed before posts are taken up [Regulation 4.(a), 4A.(3)(a)(b),4A(6-7)];
- revise, maintain and monitor an accurate centralised register of staff and checks carried out [Regulation 4C(2)(a-g), 4C(3), 4(c)(44(a)-(b), 4C(5).

(b) Recommended action

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

1. clarify the roles of leaders in the Lower School and EYFS;
2. develop the tracking of testing and assessment to enable to staff to understand objectively the academic performance of the school;
3. establish rigorous systems for ensuring and monitoring the full implementation of all safeguarding and recruitment requirements.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

- 4.1 This is a good setting that meets the needs of children well and fulfils its aim of providing a breadth of experience with care of the highest quality. It provides a warm and caring atmosphere and ensures that children progress as well as they can in their learning and development. Good quality resources and the creative use of space enable the staff to plan purposeful and challenging learning and play experiences.
- 4.2 Leadership and management are satisfactory with some good features. In Little Brooklands, leadership is based on constant self-evaluation and a clear vision; it provides an ambitious strategy and clear development plans that underpin all areas of provision. The highly motivated staff work together seamlessly to implement effective policies. Staff ratios are excellent and all staff are suitably qualified and undertake regular professional training. Effective partnerships with parents and the wider community have been established. However, the EYFS does not operate as a cohesive unit because of the fragmented leadership structure.
- 4.3 Good quality provision supports learning and development well. The curriculum is child centred and allows for the effective development and extension of children's needs and interests through the provision of a variety of sensory and investigatory experiences. The babies and toddlers, for example, explore tunnels, lights in dark tents, touch sensory mobiles and use coloured sands. Children in Little Brooklands make good use of the opportunities provided by the Forest School. There is scope to extend such imaginative opportunities to children in Reception in order to further develop their problem solving and creative thinking skills. Since the last inspection, the provision and use of the outdoor facilities has significantly improved although Reception children would benefit from a wider range of playtime equipment and resources for outdoor use. Access to the curriculum is enhanced by the facilities of the wider school and children benefit from specialist staff as well as an enhanced programme of extra-curricular activities. Achievement is closely monitored from entry into Nursery where a baseline of attainment is produced. A mixture of assessments and observations are used to produce well-documented development profiles that reflect significant milestones and inform the end of phase profile assessments.
- 4.4 The outcomes for children are good. Little Brooklands provides a good and vibrant learning environment in which every child can thrive. By the end of the EYFS, children have made outstanding progress. Children who need support have specific individual education plans and the support of a dedicated special educational needs coordinator. Appropriate specialists are brought in if diagnostic tests are required. Transition from Reception to Year 1 is well planned and the children continue to make progress. Children show a good understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and know how to stay safe. They behave well and develop good personal qualities that enable them to make a positive contribution to school life and thus develop their life skills for the future.

5. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE: ACTION POINTS

(a) Compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements

- 5.1 The school's [registered] provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Complaints since the last inspection

- 5.2 There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

(b) Recommended action

- 5.3 The Early Years Foundation Stage setting should take the following actions to improve:
1. continue to develop the free flow element of indoor/outdoor provision for all children in the EYFS;
 2. ensure that the leadership and management of the EYFS operate as a cohesive unit.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' 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. 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 Tony Hubbard	Reporting inspector
Mrs Felicity Lawson	Junior Team Inspector (Former Head of School (Pre-prep), IAPS)
Mrs Kathy McLauchlan	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Gill Harris	Early Years Team Inspector (Head of School (Pre-prep), IAPS)