



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

DEVONSHIRE HOUSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Devonshire House Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Devonshire House Preparatory School
DfE Number	202/6380
EYFS Number	EY397203
Address	Devonshire House Preparatory School 2 Arkwright Road Hampstead London NW3 6AE
Telephone Number	020 7435 1916
Fax Number	020 7433 1260
Email Address	HMPA@devonshirehouseprepschool.co.uk
Head	Mrs Stephanie Piper
Proprietors	Mr Michael Loveridge; Lady Loveridge
Age Range	2 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	647
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (369 boys; 278 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 40 5-11: 362 3-5 (EYFS): 199 11-13: 46
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Tessa Denham
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	21 Jan 2014 to 22 Jan 2014

PREFACE

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 was in March 2011.

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) (England) Regulations 2010. 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.

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 proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, attended registration sessions and met with a small group of parents. 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

Mrs Helen Dalkin

Team Inspector for Early Years (Head of Pre-prep, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Devonshire House School is a co-educational day school for boys aged from two and a half to thirteen, and girls aged two and a half to eleven. Governance is provided by the proprietor, with an advisory group formed of experienced professionals, including an educational consultant, legal advisor and accountant.
- 1.2 The school, founded in 1989, is located in large Victorian houses converted for educational use, on two neighbouring sites in Hampstead, in north London. Both sites have landscaped, courtyard gardens and large playgrounds. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) department consists of two Nurseries, one full-time and the other half-day, and nine classes of three to five-year-olds.
- 1.3 The school aims to create a caring, family environment where all children are nurtured, learning is an enjoyable experience and which encourages independence, initiative and respect in an atmosphere of fairness, mutual trust and honesty.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection in March 2011, a new headmistress has been appointed and the role of deputy head (junior school) has been split in to two roles, deputy head (junior school) and deputy head (EYFS).
- 1.5 Entry to the school is subject to an assessment and places above Year 1 are dependent on there being a vacancy. Children under the age of three attend the Nursery for morning, afternoon or full day sessions. Older children attend a minimum of five mornings and three afternoons per week, progressing to five full days by the third term in Reception. An early morning and after-school facility extends provision from 8.00 am to 5.30 pm (3.45 pm on Fridays).
- 1.6 At the time of inspection there were 647 pupils on roll, of whom 369 were boys and 278 were girls. In total, 239 children were in the EYFS. Children come largely from the surrounding area, from a variety of cultural backgrounds.
- 1.7 At the time of inspection, there were 59 children, 10 in the EYFS, identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and none had a statement of special educational needs. There were 10 children for whom English is an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive support for this. Of these, one was in the EYFS.
- 1.8 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 National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery (2 to 3 years)
Pre-Reception	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. Identify and share the most effective practice within the setting in relation to extending opportunities for child-initiated activities appropriate to each age group.
 2. Ensure that reports on children's progress accurately reflect the uniqueness of each child.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

3.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

- 3.1 The setting is outstanding in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Stimulating, richly resourced classrooms provide many opportunities to explore and play creatively. Outdoor areas present a variety of physically challenging equipment, stimulating creative play and problem-solving situations. Overall, the balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities is outstanding, although on occasion teaching is overly formal for the children's stage of development.
- 3.2 All areas of learning and development are covered exceptionally well. A clear focus on personal, physical and communication development, provides a firm foundation for under-threes. For older children, specialist teaching in music, French, and physical education (PE), provides added breadth to the curriculum. As a result, all children, including those with EAL and/or SEND, for whom there is outstanding provision, make excellent progress and achieve well, reaching, and often exceeding expected levels of development for their age.
- 3.3 Adults make excellent use of open-questioning, well-timed interventions and participation in children's play to extend learning, for example encouraging word-building with letter beads when making a necklace. Children are motivated to learn due to the enthusiasm and high expectations of the adults who care for them. Expert use of observation and assessment provides an accurate record of children's progress, allowing staff to identify challenging, yet achievable, next steps which reflect children's individual needs and interests.
- 3.4 Partnership with parents is outstanding. Staff are available to speak to parents at the beginning and end of each day, and information is readily available through notice boards, a weekly newsletter and a comprehensive parents' handbook. Information evenings provide useful guidance on supporting learning at home, and there are regular parents' evenings. Reports are provided twice a year, but do not always reflect the uniqueness of each child. A well-organised class representatives group provides a forum for canvassing parental views and concerns, which are addressed promptly.
- 3.5 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, although two or three parents expressed reservations about aspects of communication, the majority expressed a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the provision.

3.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being

- 3.6 The contribution of the provision for children's well-being is outstanding. Staff greet children warmly, helping children to settle quickly and form secure emotional attachments to key adults. Care practices, particularly for those under the age of three, recognise each child's stage of development, with appropriate levels of independence encouraged with regard to personal hygiene and self-care. Adults gently reinforce sharing and turn-taking, and good behaviour is encouraged through positive 'golden rules', the awarding of stickers and, for older children, recognition at

the weekly 'courtesy assembly'. As a result, children are happy in the setting and enjoy what they do there.

- 3.7 Daily access to the outside areas, and regular PE sessions, promote a positive attitude to physical exercise and a healthy diet and lifestyle. Adults know and understand the policies pertaining to children's well-being extremely well, and are diligent in their implementation. Communication within the EYFS is outstanding, and close attention is paid to managing transitions between classes.

3.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision

- 3.8 Leadership and management in the EYFS are outstanding, providing highly effective oversight of the educational programmes. Governance is robust and arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective. Recruitment procedures are rigorous, with all required checks completed and carefully recorded prior to employment, and induction for new staff is comprehensive. Regular risk assessments and strict adherence to all health and safety procedures ensure that children are safe at all times, as potential hazards are swiftly removed.
- 3.9 Clearly defined management structures allow careful monitoring of provision and outcomes. As a result, self-evaluation, to which all staff contribute, is excellent and areas for development are quickly identified. Regular staff appraisal underpins a very pro-active approach to professional development, and staff are encouraged to attend and then share training with their colleagues. Although the timing and structure of them is yet to be formalised, recently introduced supervision meetings provide support and guidance for all staff. This has resulted in improvements to both teaching and learning, for example by identifying and addressing the need to extend the use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- 3.10 The setting works extremely closely with outside agencies, other professionals and parents to secure appropriate provision for children requiring additional support.

3.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision

- 3.11 The overall quality and standards of the provision are outstanding. By the age of three children have attained, and often exceeded, expected levels of development due to the individualised care they receive. Older children, including those with SEND and/or EAL make at least good and often outstanding progress, with most achieving the Early Learning Goals before the end of the Foundation Stage.
- 3.12 Children under the age of three clearly enjoy their time in the setting, becoming confident communicators through daily circle times that include songs, counting activities and listening games. Secure relationships with key adults support children's developing social skills.
- 3.13 In the Nursery, a structured phonics programme gives children a strong foundation in literacy. Reception children write familiar words with accurately formed letters, and make plausible attempts at unfamiliar words. Children make strong progress in numeracy, becoming familiar with mathematical concepts in the Nursery, as they weigh and buy items in a role-play shop. In Reception they identify one more or less than numbers up to 20, and solve simple addition and subtraction problems with numbers up to 10.
- 3.14 Children develop excellent understanding of the world around them through interesting classroom themes, visits to museums and other outings. They become

familiar with technology, using computers, programmable and remote control toys with confidence.

- 3.15 Children know how to move safely around the setting, becoming increasingly independent as they are given new responsibilities such as taking registers to the office, or collecting snack trays for their class. They understand the importance of washing their hands at appropriate times, enjoy the freshly prepared lunches, and are able to explain the importance of exercise and a healthy lifestyle. Strict adherence to safeguarding and welfare policies ensures children's well-being within a safe, stimulating environment.
- 3.16 Since the previous inspection, systems for assessing and tracking progress and provision for ICT have been significantly improved, to the benefit of teaching and learning alike. Highly effective self-evaluation and excellent management underpin the setting's capacity for continued improvement.