



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**BEACHBOROUGH SCHOOL**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Beachborough School

Full Name of School	<b>Beachborough School</b>		
DCSF Number	<b>825/6002</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY 361682</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>309910</b>		
Address	<b>Westbury Manor</b> <b>Westbury</b> <b>Brackley</b> <b>Northamptonshire</b> <b>NN13 5LB</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01280 700071</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01280 704839</b>		
Email Address	<b>Office@beachborough.com</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Jonathan Whybrow</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Harry Thuillier</b>		
Age Range	<b>2½ to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>305</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (161 boys; 144 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>6</b>	5-11: <b>199</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>43</b>	11-13: <b>57</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>305</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding:	<b>45</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>0</b>	
	Full:	<b>0</b>	Weekly: <b>0</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>10 Nov 2009 to 11 Nov 2009</b>		

## PREFACE

The 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 February 2006.

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 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

A specific inspection of boarding was not carried out and the report does not contain judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Any comments on boarding arising from this inspection are in the context of the school as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

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.

# CONTENTS

Page

**1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

**2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

**3 MAIN SCHOOL: ACTION POINTS**

(a) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(b) Recommended action

**4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

**5 EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE: ACTION POINTS**

(a) Compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements

(b) Recommended action

**INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Beachborough School is a co-educational preparatory school for pupils aged 2½ to 13. The principal aim is to prepare children for transfer to senior school. The school sets out to reward the best, while valuing the efforts of all individuals. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs, beliefs and cultures of others. Good manners and self-discipline are expected. The aim is for a balance between work and play, recognising that children need time to play. A distinctive feature is the approach to boarding. Some attend entirely as day pupils, but many take advantage of flexi-boarding. Provision is made for 45 boarders, and 85 pupils board regularly. A charitable trust, the school has a board of eleven governors. Some are past parents or pupils. Four are senior staff from local independent schools.
- 1.2 The school celebrates its centenary in 2010. In its time it has been located in various parts of England. Since 1942 it has occupied a 30-acre site at Westbury, close to the Buckinghamshire-Northamptonshire-Oxfordshire borders. Modern buildings enhance a former manor house. Since the inspection in 2006, a major classroom block has been built for the younger pupils. Extensive refurbishment of the entire site has taken place, including major developments in information and communication technology to aid learning and administration. The school has 305 pupils, including 49 aged under 5. The ability profile is above the national average, but with a very wide spread of abilities as entry is non-selective. Most pupils live within a few miles of the school, with parents engaged in various professions. Nearly one-sixth of pupils are American, due to the proximity of a military base. Fifty-six pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, many of whom receive specialist support. No pupil has English as an additional language.

- 1.3 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
Nursery	
Kindergarten	
Reception	Reception

***Pre-preparatory Department***

School	NC name
Pre-Prep 1	Year 1
Pre-Prep 2	Year 2

***Preparatory Department***

School	NC name
Form I	Year 3
Form II	Year 4
Form III	Year 5
Form IV	Year 6
Form V	Year 7
Form VI	Year 8

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

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

- 2.1 Throughout the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), pupils are successful in their learning, and clearly enjoy their lessons. Good progress in EYFS enables children to exceed national expectations at the end of the Reception year. This progress is maintained throughout Years 1 to 8, enabling pupils to achieve entry to appropriate senior schools, and to develop skills in literacy and numeracy. Various standardised tests provide information to divide year groups by ability, and help to indicate which senior schools may be suitable for each pupil. Scholarships are often achieved for academic prowess, art, sports, music or all-round ability. Many pupils pass music examinations, and choirs frequently achieve success in local festivals. Sporting accomplishments include county and national representation. The wide and varied curriculum is complemented by co-curricular provision, which is a strength of the school. An extensive range of activities is offered. The Forest School, an outdoor classroom, is a special feature, put to good use by pupils of all ages, who also enjoy the school farm. The school day is very long, but activities are an integral part. Pupils spoke highly of the enjoyable opportunities they have. Staff commitment to the activities programme reinforces the happy and relaxed relationships they share with pupils.
- 2.2 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers are well aware of pupils' capabilities, and plan and prepare work conscientiously at an appropriate level. Effective support is given for pupils who need extra help. Great care is taken in deciding when to divide year groups by ability, and in which subjects. However, the most able pupils were not provided with more challenging work in some of the lessons observed. This matter was also raised by a few parents in the pre-inspection questionnaire.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.3 From the earliest years, pupils develop as confident, assured individuals. The school is correct in its claim that 'valuing the efforts of all individuals' is the aim it fulfils best. Pupils make the most of their natural ability. They enjoy the extensive grounds, where playing in the woods is an especially popular pastime. The fallen leaves currently provide an additional resource for den building. Pupils appreciate the large three-dimensional art displays that enhance many parts of the school. During the inspection a poignant outdoor service of remembrance took place. Staff are excellent role models, and pupils clearly know right from wrong. Praise and positive reinforcement are the norm. Pupils are attached to one of four 'clubs', to which they show great loyalty, and much good natured competition takes place, with enjoyment the main aim. The tutor system is highly effective, where pupils see their teachers in another role, always ready to help. Pupils were seen to be very supportive of each other's achievements. The school council is highly regarded, giving pupils a voice and a budget to carry out their own ideas for school improvement. Older pupils cheerfully undertake voluntary tasks, for example in the library. All Year 8 pupils can become prefects, and are rigorously trained for this role. The option to board during the week is popular. In the pre-inspection questionnaire and in interviews, pupils were most appreciative of this facility and the enjoyable opportunities it provides.

- 2.4 Statutory policies for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are all in place, and great attention has been paid to ensure they are thorough and practicable. All necessary steps have been taken with regard to such matters as risk assessments, testing of equipment and fire procedures. Support staff, including matrons, make a considerable contribution to pupils' well-being, and are highly regarded by them. Registration of pupils is carried out diligently in the morning and afternoon, and in addition all pupils sign out before going home. A few irregularities exist in the way the attendance registers are completed, some of which also apply to the admissions register. These administrative shortcomings have no impact on the safety or welfare of the pupils.

### **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.5 The school is well governed, the governors taking a real interest and liaising closely with staff when necessary. The chairman gives a good lead, and knows the school very well. Governors oversee the financial, and welfare, health and safety requirements of the school, but also challenge and question as they fulfil their strategic role. More than just authorising new developments, the fundamental use and layout of the Boardman building were determined by the governors working in true partnership with senior staff. Discussions are now underway regarding the next building project. Checks are made on all those who work in the school, in any capacity, and the required centralised register is in place. A few lapses were found in procedures, although in the majority of cases the school had already identified these and begun remedial action.
- 2.6 The school is well managed and led, with the headmaster and three deputies having clearly delineated roles, working together as an effective team. In the questionnaires, parents and pupils indicated strong confidence in the way the school is run. The school claims that 'the headmaster and senior management team, supported by the governors, offer the school clear leadership and direction, maintain its ethos, pursue its aims and genuinely care for the children it educates'. This is clearly true. The school's carefully maintained premises and other facilities are one of its strengths. Links with parents are good, with reports sent every December and July, and formal consultations also held twice each year. The school has an excellent website, and a new intranet facility is already further enabling effective communication with families. One formal complaint was received in the last year, but resolved at an early stage in the complaints procedure.

### **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:

- ensure that for each pupil, the admission register contains the name and address of every person known to the proprietor to be a parent of the pupil (and an indication of the parent with whom the pupil normally resides), at least one telephone number at which the parent can be contacted in an emergency, and that in the admissions and attendance registers all entries must be in ink and any amendments must show the original and amended entries, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name of the person making the amendment [Regulation 3.(9)].

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

- ensure that for all members of staff and volunteers appointed to a position at the school, appropriate checks are carried out to confirm in respect of each such person character references and where appropriate, professional references [Regulation 4.(2)(a)];
- ensure that for any governor appointed after 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007 an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check is obtained before appointment [Regulation 4B.(4)(a)].

#### **(b) Recommended action**

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

1. extend existing good practice to ensure that all gifted and talented pupils are identified and given every opportunity to achieve the highest possible standards.

#### **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

- 4.1 This is an effective setting. Good provision ensures the achievement of the aim 'to discover, nurture and develop the potential in each child.' Teachers' high expectations, good understanding of young children, and strong links with parents and carers enable significant progress to be made by children with differing abilities and needs.
- 4.2 The leadership and management of the setting are good. Documentation is regularly reviewed and implemented effectively. Assessment arrangements monitor progress and feed into final assessment files. Links with parents are very good. In the pre-inspection questionnaire parents expressed their appreciation of their children's pleasing progress and the high standard of their care. Many commented that staff always 'go the extra mile', know their children well and provide them with detailed information on their progress. The setting has strong links with a local authority for training, monitoring and support services, ensuring a good standard of care. Early Years Foundation Stage staff have regular meetings to evaluate their success and adapt their planning. Since the previous inspection, information and communication technology has been fully integrated into the curriculum and staff have been trained to use the new intranet system.
- 4.3 Teaching is planned with a good knowledge of learning and development requirements, and a full understanding of how young children learn and progress. The classrooms and outside play areas provide a safe, well-equipped and welcoming environment although the children currently only have direct access to a man-made outdoor area with little protection from sun and rain. The extended learning environment of the school is a strength of the provision. One parent commented that her child loves Forest School. Kindergarten and Nursery children were able to look for hibernating sites for squirrels and hedgehogs within the school grounds. They showed great interest when looking at where the badgers had been feeding and great happiness throwing piles of leaves in the air. A balance is maintained between adult-led and child-initiated activities involving choosing, exploring and discovering. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to ensure children are protected and well supported. Staffing arrangements provide good supervision and well-qualified support for the children. Risk assessments are thorough in the setting and medical provision is of a high standard. All parts of the appointment checks, including those with the Criminal Records Bureau, are now in place to ensure that all adults are suitable to work with children.
- 4.4 Children's achievements are considerable. They are confident when using computers and mathematical skills are well developed. They speak fluently and listen well. Reception children are beginning to read well and use more complex sentences. In games and when using wheeled toys children are well co-ordinated, and display careful control when writing, painting and using scissors. Their personal development is outstanding. They relate well to each other and adults, and share and co-operate well. When given free choice of activities they are inquisitive, enthusiastic and self-motivated. They appreciate the importance of healthy eating, can identify healthy foods and learn the benefits of exercise. They delight in increasing their understanding of the wider world through play activities. The children are happy and secure in the setting and enjoy the many experiences offered to them.

## **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 Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

### **(b) Recommended action**

- 5.3 The Early Years Foundation Stage setting should take the following action to improve:
1. build on the ready outdoor access by the provision of a waterproof canopy in the existing play area and extend the play area into a safe, fenced garden area.

## **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 the chairman of governors, observed a sample of the co-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 David Bunkell

Mrs Christine Leslie

Mrs Susan Barnes

Reporting Inspector

Junior Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Early Years Lead Inspector