

# Orchard School and Nursery

Independent school inspection report

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DCSF registration number	823/6018
Unique reference number	133596
Inspection number	344382
Inspection dates	27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Julie Winyard HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 as amended.

Age group: 6 months to 8 years

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1</sup>

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

## Information about the school

The Orchard is an independent school and nursery on the outskirts of Barton le Clay a large village south of Bedford. Pupils attending the school come from surrounding towns and villages. The school is housed on two sites. The under-two-year-old children attend the Sharpenhoe Road site and the remainder attend the Higham Road site which was originally built as an infant school. The school promotes a holistic approach to care and education and aims to develop a passion for learning in the pupils and for them 'to be the best that they can be'. The nursery opened in 1991 and the school in 2001. There are currently 107 pupils on roll. Their ages range from 6 months to eight years old. The school was last inspected in March 2007. There was an Early Years Inspection in April 2008.

## Evaluation of the school

Orchard School and Nursery is a good school with some outstanding features. The quality of education it provides is good, as is the quality of teaching. As a result, the pupils make good progress. The school meets all the regulations relating to independent schools. The care the pupils receive is outstanding and all safeguarding requirements are fully met. The pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding as is their enjoyment of learning and behaviour. The school has made good improvement since its last inspection and all the recommendations have been successfully addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

## Quality of education

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of the curriculum is good with some outstanding aspects; for example, the recent development of cross-curricular themes which are directly relevant to pupils' needs and interests. These new themes have contributed to the pupils' outstanding enjoyment of their lessons and learning, as have the innovative and thought provoking philosophy lessons. Each of the themes has detailed plans showing the key skills that pupils will be learning. There are also detailed policies and plans for all subjects. Lesson planning is good. Every lesson has a clear learning objective and the plan shows how activities are designed to meet the needs of all abilities in the class. The curriculum is broad and balanced and activities provided enable pupils to make good progress and attain standards that are well above average. The curriculum is enriched through weekly dance lessons and by the specialist teaching in French, music and physical education. Very good use is made of the extensive school grounds and caring for the environment is an important part of the school's ethos. For example, the pupils have constructed 'hides' in several classrooms so that they can observe the birds coming into the school grounds as part of the Big Garden Birdwatch week. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. The curriculum is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage where teachers' planning caters for each child's stage of learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the rest of the school, the quality of teaching and assessment is good, with some that is outstanding. Teaching has improved since the last inspection because the deputy headteacher carefully monitors the quality of teaching and gives feedback regarding strengths and areas for development. It was evident during the inspection that this has had an impact on improving practice. The staff know the pupils extremely well and this contributes to the excellent relationships throughout the school and to the pupils' great enjoyment of their lessons. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils excitedly worked out how to pair up with another pupil so that the numbers they held added up to 10 and were thrilled when they found their partner. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and resources are used well within lessons to support learning. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support the learning of individuals and groups. Teachers match learning activities carefully to meet the needs of all abilities and all pupils make equally good progress in lessons because of this careful planning. One example was observed in a mathematics lesson when some pupils had a suitably challenging number investigation while others were working on a different activity which moved their learning forward.

The school has recently purchased computer software to support the tracking of pupils' progress from Year 1 to Year 3. This is proving very useful in rapidly identifying any underachievement and also where pupils are making good progress. The school acknowledges that this system could be expanded and used to give more information about pupils' progress through the whole school. There are regular and

accurate assessments of pupils' writing. All pupils have learning targets for English and mathematics and know their targets well. However, they do not always understand exactly what these targets mean. Pupils' work is carefully marked, although there is no specific policy as to how much detail is needed in marking different types of work. For example, in some cases where it would be helpful to pupils to know exactly where they have done well and precisely what they need to do to improve their work further, this information is not given in sufficient detail.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and, because they love coming to school, attendance is good. Pupils' excellent spiritual development is evident in how reflective they are both about their work and their behaviour. All pupils join in the 'Thank you' to God before meals and see this as an important start to the lunchtime. Behaviour is outstanding throughout the school day and in all activities before and after school. Pupils have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Their excellent social and moral understanding is also evident in how kind, considerate, well-mannered and polite they are towards each other and towards adults. Teachers manage behaviour consistently well and pupils greatly value their 'Golden Time'; given for good work and behaviour.

Pupils make a very good contribution to the community particularly through their participation in a wide variety of fund raising activities for a range of charities. This helps them to gain an understanding of, and to develop positive attitudes towards, people less fortunate than themselves. Pupils enjoy the challenge of devising and running stalls for the annual summer fete. This provides a good opportunity to develop their financial skills as does helping with the annual sale of harvest produce. A school council is about to be elected and to prepare for this, pupils are learning about democratic processes. From the Reception class onwards, pupils are being taught how to nominate someone for the council and are learning about how the council will operate. Information and communication technology is used well throughout the curriculum and the school has ordered new laptops to give pupils more opportunities to develop their skills. This and the good progress in English and mathematics, prepares pupils very well for the next stage in their education.

Pupils' outstanding cultural understanding is developed well through the curriculum and through the school taking every opportunity to celebrate the festivals related to all faith communities represented by pupils and parents.

## Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school has put in place outstanding measures to promote the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, including child protection. All safeguarding procedures, including appropriate staff recruitment, are fully in place and meet requirements. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily and say they feel very safe at school and that there is no bullying. The school has nearly completed its plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, amended by the Special Educational Needs & Disability Act 2001 and is currently developing a new plan. The requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage are fully met.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and some important aspects, such as the promotion of children's welfare and provision for their personal development, are outstanding. All children receive a very high standard of care from dedicated and well-trained staff. Children of all ages quickly settle in, separating from their parents without fear and quickly becoming familiar with daily routines. The quality of provision is good and, reassured by the very effective key worker system, parents are rightly confident that their children are in good hands. As they get older, children thoroughly enjoy the time spent in the pre-nursery, nursery and reception classes, making good overall progress in their learning and development. These positive outcomes are underpinned by consistently good teaching and children make especially rapid progress in the development of their physical, creative and writing skills. Teamwork between teachers and support staff is seamless and they strike a good balance between giving children freedom to choose what they want to do and guiding them towards specific, planned activities.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. However, the school does not compare the standard of children's work and progress made in the reception class with that of their peers nationally to assess the effectiveness of the provision and to identify areas of relative strength or weakness. In addition, there is no dedicated, fenced outdoor play area for these young children to facilitate outdoor learning throughout the year.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations').

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Consolidate current strategies and initiatives in tracking pupils' progress, target-setting, assessment, marking and feedback so that they are fully embedded in everyday practice across the school.
- Develop the outside area so that it fully meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage by enabling children to have opportunities to play outdoors all year round.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?		✓		
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?		✓		
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?		✓		
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?		✓		

## School details

Name of school	Orchard School and Nursery		
DCSF number	820/6018		
Unique reference number	133596		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY298247		
Type of school	Pre-preparatory school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2001		
Age range of pupils	6 months to 8 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 53	Girls: 54	Total: 107
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 5,790		
Annual fees (childcare)	£ 9,000–10,560		
Address of school	Higham Road Barton-le-Clay Bedford Bedfordshire MK45 4LT		
Telephone number	01582 882054		
Fax number	01582 882162		
Email address	admin@orchardschool.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Burton		
Proprietor	Mrs Anne Burton		
Reporting inspector	Julie Winyard HMI		
Dates of inspection	27 January 2010		