



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**COOPERSALE HALL SCHOOL**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Coopersale Hall School

Full Name of School	<b>Coopersale Hall School</b>
DfE Number	<b>881/6040</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY397364</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>N/A</b>
Address	<b>Coopersale Hall School Flux's Lane Epping Essex CM16 7PE</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01992 577133</b>
Fax Number	<b>01992 571544</b>
Email Address	<b>info@coopersalehallschool.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Miss Kaye Lovejoy</b>
Proprietors	<b>Mr Nicholas Hagger; Mrs Ann Hagger; Mr Matthew Hagger</b>
Age Range	<b>2½ to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>253</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (116 boys; 137 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 3      5-11:      183 3-5 (EYFS): 67</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Helena Medway-Gash</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>14 Jun 2011 to 15 Jun 2011</b>

## 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 May 2007.

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 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, 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.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will 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.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Coopersale Hall School is a co-educational day school for pupils from 2½ to 11 years of age. It was founded in 1989 on its present seven-acre site on the edge of Epping Forest. It occupies a much adapted large eighteenth century house, together with purpose built accommodation. The school aims to offer a high standard of education through a broad curriculum within a happy, secure and disciplined environment. The school is one of three family-owned schools in the Oak-Tree Group. One of the proprietors serves as principal for all three schools and works closely with the head, who was appointed in January 2011.
- 1.2 The school has a total of 253 pupils, of whom 70 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children in the EYFS occupy a suite of rooms on the ground floor with direct access to an outdoor play area. The numbers of boys and girls are roughly equal. Pupils are drawn from a ten-mile radius of the school and come from families of a wide range of economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds.
- 1.3 Admission is based on the school's own selection procedures. The ability range is wide, but overall the ability of pupils is above the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and twenty-nine pupils in Years 1 to 6 receive specialist support for learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). In total, ten pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and of these, two receive support with their English.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used by the school in Years 1 to 6 and 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 (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Lower Kindergarten	Nursery (ages two and a half to three)
Upper Kindergarten	Nursery (ages three to four)
Transition	Reception

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

- 2.1 Throughout the school, the pupils' overall achievement is good. The school successfully meets its aims of providing a high standard of education through a broad curriculum within a happy, secure and disciplined environment. Pupils are well educated and leave school suitably prepared for the next stage of their education. Almost all pupils are successful in securing a place at their first choice of senior school and a number are awarded academic, sport or drama scholarships.
- 2.2 In lessons and extra-curricular activities, pupils, including those with LDD or EAL, demonstrate good levels of knowledge and understanding, and they have well-developed skills in numeracy and literacy. More able pupils achieve well. Pupils apply mathematical skills with confidence in familiar and new work, and use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively for research and in presenting work. Pupils are good listeners and are articulate, and read with fluency and understanding. Their reasoning skills are well developed and they can think for themselves. Displays around the school demonstrate a high standard of creativity, particularly through art.
- 2.3 Pupils are successful in instrumental music, and speech and drama examinations, as well as in creative writing. These achievements, together with participation in drama and musical productions, reinforce aesthetic values. Sports teams and individuals achieve well at local, regional and national levels in athletics, cross country running, football, karate, netball and swimming. These successes make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development.
- 2.4 As pupils are not entered for national tests at the ages of 7 and 11, their attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against a fixed norm, but on the evidence available it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. The pupils make good progress overall in their learning in relation to their above average ability. Their progress is promoted by effective teaching and their own perseverance. As a result of good diagnosis of and support for their needs, pupils with LDD or EAL achieve well at every stage.
- 2.5 Pupils are eager to learn. In class they settle quickly to their work and their behaviour is exemplary. They respond to good teaching in a climate of encouragement and they are keen to succeed. They concentrate well and persevere with their work.
- 2.6 The pupils' progress and achievement are supported by a broad and balanced curriculum that accommodates those with widely different abilities and needs. Religious studies (RS) and the programme of personal, social and health education reflect the school's aims and effectively support the pupils' levels of personal development. Drama and dance add to the creative and aesthetic experience of pupils. The curriculum is complemented by a good range of off-site visits that include overseas trips to France and outdoor adventurous activities. Through activities in the community, such as the distribution of harvest gifts to a centre for homeless people in London, pupils develop a deeper understanding of the needs of others in circumstances different from their own. Effective long-, medium- and short-term planning supports the curriculum and provides continuity from one year to the next. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the wide-ranging and challenging extra-

curricular programme, which gives them opportunities to acquire new skills and to develop their talents.

- 2.7 The pupils' achievements are strongly supported by knowledgeable teaching. In the lessons observed, teaching was good. Teachers plan lessons carefully, using good quality resources, including ICT, to add variety to learning. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning through the support they provide, particularly for pupils with LDD or EAL. Teaching is characterised by high expectations although not all teaching sets tasks to challenge pupils of different abilities.
- 2.8 Marking is regular and gives pupils encouragement though does not always offer guidance for improvement. The use of standardised tests in mathematics and English enables teachers to monitor the pupils' achievement in these areas closely. The school is aware that without any baseline testing of ability, it is difficult to know whether pupils are achieving as well as they should be in relation to their ability.

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

- 2.9 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. It resonates with the aims of the school. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, almost every pupil said that they like being at school.
- 2.10 Pupils have a well-developed sense of identity and grow in self-knowledge and self-confidence in the school's strong community and in response to a culture of praise. They participate in reflective worship in both whole-school assemblies, which they frequently lead, and radio assemblies in form time. Through the RS lessons, as well as visits to places of worship, pupils learn about other faiths and recognise a need to accommodate differences and respect the integrity of others. The pupils have a strong sense of fair play and understand what constitutes right and wrong. Their moral awareness is reflected in their commitment to helping others and notably their enthusiastic response to charities, most recently in the beanstalk challenge for Barnardos, Great Ormond Street Hospital and Children in Need.
- 2.11 The pupils' social development is excellent. They thrive on the additional responsibility they are given as team captains, house officers, prefects and school council representatives, and through the 'buddy' system, where those in Years 5 and 6 help younger pupils in the playground or with reading. The pupil voice is strongly heard, not only through the 'suggestions box', but also in the school council, where for example, pupils negotiated more healthy school lunches and the provision of fruit at break. Pupils have a growing understanding of public institutions and services. They have a strong appreciation of their own heritage which is strengthened by visits to museums and art galleries. They learn about other cultures in art, dance, drama, geography and history, and they are aware of cultural diversity in the world and the purpose of tolerance and harmony.
- 2.12 The quality of pastoral care is excellent and supports the pupils' strong personal development. The staff provide high quality support and guidance, based on secure knowledge of pupils and the high degree of trust that underlies their relationships with them. Pupils commented that they are happy and feel secure. Well-understood procedures are in place to respond promptly to their individual needs. Pupils conduct themselves in an exemplary way. They said that bullying is extremely rare and that differences are resolved swiftly and effectively.

- 2.13 The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is implemented effectively. All members of staff have received appropriate child protection training. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. Lunches are nutritious, with suitably varied menus. The provision of breakfast and tea for pupils is a service appreciated by parents.
- 2.14 Health and safety measures are effective, with risk assessment securely in place and educational visits thoroughly planned. The arrangements for pupils who become ill at school are good and the medical room is comfortable and appropriately equipped. Measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards; regular fire drills are held and all staff receive fire training. Supporting documentation is of high quality.

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

- 2.15 The quality of governance is excellent. Through the principal, the proprietors have effective oversight of the school and fully support its aims. The staff at the group's central office have a substantial range of relevant expertise, and through regular, well-organised meetings with the senior leadership team (SLT), oversee the work of the school effectively. They have a clear strategic vision and are actively involved with school improvement and development. Through the principal, the proprietors are effective in discharging their responsibilities for monitoring safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. They are committed and knowledgeable, enabling them to provide high quality support and challenge. Financial management is strong. A high level of staffing is provided, and the accommodation and resources support the needs of pupils and the curriculum well.
- 2.16 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The pupils' achievement and their personal development are strongly fostered, in line with the school's aims. The SLT provides a caring and clear sense of direction across the whole range of school activity. They are hard-working and dedicated to providing a strong family ethos, through which they respond to the needs of individual pupils. They are accessible and approachable. Whole-school development planning, to which all staff have had the opportunity to contribute, demonstrates how the quality of the pupils' education is kept under constant review. Performance management is not yet linked closely to development planning needs. The principal works with the SLT in drawing up high quality policies to support the smooth running of the school. Middle managers put these into practice successfully, although there are inconsistencies in the monitoring of teaching to ensure that tasks match different abilities.
- 2.17 Close attention is paid to recruitment checks and the correct recording of these for all those working in the school before an appointment is confirmed. Staff new to the school are given appropriate induction and support. The administration of the school is efficient. The bright and welcoming buildings, as well as the grounds and sports facilities, are maintained to a uniformly high standard.
- 2.18 The quality of links with parents is excellent. Parents are content with most aspects of school life. In response to pre-inspection questionnaires, they singled out for particular praise the quality of the education and pastoral care, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views, and the availability of information about the school. A small number of parents said that they would welcome more information on their children's progress. The inspectors agree with parents' views.

- 2.19 Communication between home and school is strong. Parents are kept fully informed about all aspects of school life through the weekly newsletter, parents' handbook and wealth of information on the website. They have numerous opportunities to visit; for example, they support sports teams, attend music and drama productions, and regularly come to school for meetings. Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with all the required information. The full end-of-year report provides parents with a good overview of their children's progress and achievement during the year, and includes targets for improvement. The interim report, however, is insufficiently detailed to give parents meaningful information about their children's progress. The thriving Parents' Association supports the school in various practical ways that strengthen its links with home. The school has a suitable procedure for handling complaints.

### **3. ACTION POINTS**

#### **(i) 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 2010.

#### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop the use of assessment information to monitor and track pupils' progress across all subject areas.
  2. Strengthen arrangements for reporting the pupils' progress and achievement to parents.
  3. Provide up-to-date training for EYFS staff to ensure consistency in assessment throughout the EYFS.
  4. Provide an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities in the EYFS.

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

##### **4.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.1 The overall provision in the EYFS is good, with some outstanding aspects. This happy family setting provides a high quality of education and care where all children learn and flourish. Children are confident to celebrate their achievements in communication, language and literacy. Caring and committed staff have a strong partnership with parents. Changes which have been made since the previous inspection include a new learning support team, improvements to the outdoor provision, a new Reception classroom, a home-school communication book, a 'learning journey' for recording each child's progress and a more effective induction procedure for staff. The new management staff have undertaken an overall review in order to sustain improvements set out in the development plan.

##### **4.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.2 The leadership and management are good with some outstanding aspects, such as the maintenance of a safe and secure environment and the establishment of good teamwork of caring and committed staff. The strong partnership with supportive parents is enhanced through the home-school communication book and good links with the local community and external agencies. Recruitment procedures confirm that adults are suitable to work with children. Staff are deployed effectively and are suitably trained for their safeguarding and first aid responsibilities. The EYFS is working in close harmony with the vision of the new management and has put in place new procedures for risk assessment and reporting to parents. Clear policies and procedures are implemented, which promote equality and eliminate discrimination. Good resources, including ICT, are not yet used effectively because children have limited opportunities to initiate their use.

##### **4.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.3 The quality of provision is good with outstanding aspects, such as the well-resourced environment, where children are confident and enjoy their learning. Children benefit from adult-led activities that promote and develop their knowledge. Those under the age of three are learning early literacy skills and counting, while those over three are learning to grow vegetables, read books, measure and subtract. Staff record observation, assessment and next steps, but the approach used is inconsistent due to limited staff training, which has been identified by the school. Children are encouraged to discuss and make healthy choices at snack and lunch time, and they are eager to share their understanding of healthy eating habits. Children practise high standards of hygiene, follow rules, and feel safe and secure because of well-established routines.

#### **4.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 4.4 Outcomes for children are good, with some outstanding aspects. Polite, articulate children initiate discussion and demonstrate exemplary behaviour, resulting in a calm working atmosphere that enables them to acquire good work habits. They are making good progress in relation to their individual starting points. For those who are over three, skills are particularly strong in reading. They enjoy books and use phonic knowledge to write simple words in neat script. They use mathematical skills to attempt addition and subtraction, and to identify shapes and measure water in jugs confidently. Those who are under three are developing excellent social skills. Children know how to keep safe, make friends and share ideas. They respond well to adult expectations and are learning about leading healthy lifestyles through discussion about food and decision making at snack time, and they take pride in their achievements on sports day. Children of all ages are learning valuable literacy skills for the future.

#### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

- 4.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

#### **Complaints since the last inspection**

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

**Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and one of the proprietors, 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 Margaret Banks

Mr Jonathan Atkin

Ms Anne McConway

Ms Barbara Whiteway

Reporting Inspector

Deputy Head, IAPS school

Early Years Lead Inspector

Early Years Team Inspector

Head of Pre Prep, IAPS school