



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

CUMNOR HOUSE SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Cumnor House School

Full Name of School	Cumnor House School
DfE Number	306/6003
EYFS Number	EY345422/EY424835
Address	Cumnor House School 166 - 170 Pampisford Road South Croydon Surrey CR2 6DA Great Britain
Telephone Number	020 86603445
Fax Number	020 86603445
Email Address	admin@cumnorhouse.com
Head	Mr Peter Clare-Hunt
Proprietor	Cognita
Age Range	2 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	575
Gender of Pupils	Boys
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 55 5-11: 317 3-5 (EYFS): 139 11-13: 64
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs M. Collins and Mrs C Figueira
EYFS Gender	Mixed ages 2 to 4; boys only ages 4 to 5
Inspection dates	10 Dec 2013 to 11 Dec 2013

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 November 2010.

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.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted informal discussions with children and examined samples of work. They held discussions with senior members of staff, parents, and with the proprietor's representative, observed after-school care facilities, and attended registration sessions. 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
Miss Patricia Griffin	Team Inspector for Early Years (Former Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Kathryn Henry	Team Inspector for Early Years (Former EYFS Leader, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Cumnor House School is a day school for boys from the ages of two to thirteen, and girls from the ages of two to four. It is a member of the Cognita group, currently encompassing sixty-four schools across three continents. The board of Cognita provides the governance of the school.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1931 and named after the house in which, with many additional buildings, it remains to this day. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises Treetops Nursery, two classes with outdoor play areas, situated on the sports ground a short walk away. A second Treetops Nursery, comprising three nursery classes for boys and girls from the ages of two to four and three Reception classes for boys, has been started since the previous inspection. This facility is located on a self-contained site with outdoor play areas, one-and-a-half miles from the main school site.
- 1.3 Cumnor House has a Christian foundation but welcomes pupils from all faiths and cultures. It aims to encourage a love of learning, a sense of curiosity, open-mindedness perseverance and critical thinking. The school's ethos is underpinned by the 'Cumnor Way' which encourages children to: do your best to be your best self; listen; share; forgive; be helpful; be kind; be truthful and treat others as you would like to be treated.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 575 pupils on roll with 81 boys and 69 girls in the nursery, 44 boys in Reception, and 381 boys in Years 1 to 8. Most come from professional backgrounds and travel up to five miles to attend the school. Pupils leave the school at the age of 10 or 11 to go to local grammar or independent schools, or at the age of 13, when most move to a range of independent day or boarding schools. The majority are successful in gaining places to their first choice of school.
- 1.5 Seventeen pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and receive learning support. Of these, none were in the EYFS. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Forty-five pupils, including seven in the EYFS, have English as an additional language (EAL). Of these, all the children in the EYFS and eleven of those in the main school receive additional support.
- 1.6 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
Little Acorns	Nursery
Treetops 1	Nursery
Treetops 2	Nursery
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) Recommendation for further improvement.

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Ensure that all independent activities provided to support adult-led sessions engage and challenge all children.

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. Richly resourced environments, including natural and soft-surface outdoor areas, provide a wide range of easily accessible materials that motivate self-directed play and exploration. Adults generally provide an excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-supported activities. On occasion, however, some activities provided for children to undertake independently, in support of those that are adult-led, do not always meet children's individual learning needs, or keep them fully focused. Carefully judged interventions, by enthusiastic and knowledgeable adults who have high expectations, encourage children to reflect on their learning and to reinforce and refine their understanding. This ensures every child has an equal opportunity to make significant progress and is well prepared for the next stage in their education. Very good open questioning supports language development and critical thinking skills, although younger children are not always given sufficient time to reflect and answer. Specialist teaching, in music for all children, and in physical education and swimming for those over the age of three, significantly enhances children's experiences.
- 3.2 The progress check undertaken at the age of two is used extremely well to monitor progress and identify areas for additional support. Photographs and detailed observations enable accurate assessment. Planning incorporates all areas of the EYFS curriculum, with an appropriate emphasis on the prime areas for children under the age of three.
- 3.3 Adults work very closely with parents to identify children's individual needs and interests, and a recently introduced Parent Engagement Group provides a valuable forum for two-way communication between parents and staff. As a result, parental concerns are addressed promptly, normally without recourse to the formal complaints procedure.
- 3.4 Only a very small number of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, but the vast majority of these, and those with whom inspectors were able to speak, expressed almost unanimous satisfaction with all aspects of the provision. An extremely small number of parents expressed a desire for more extra-curricular activities. The school has taken the considered view that the after-school care provides an appropriate range of activities that supplement the school day. An equally small number of parents would like more frequent updates about children's progress. Inspectors found that the school works very hard to ensure parents are kept very well informed. Information regarding the EYFS, activities within the school and support for children with EAL, is readily available so that parents can support learning at home. Detailed reports and parents' evenings are provided every term, ensuring parents are kept very well informed about their child's progress. Children settle very quickly and are extremely happy in the setting.

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

- 3.5 The contribution of the provision for children's well-being is outstanding. Key people develop close relationships with the children, parents and, where appropriate, extended families, recognising the uniqueness of each child. Sensitive relationships between adults and children result in a calm purposeful atmosphere where children feel secure and motivated to learn. A 'Hello' song, sung in a range of languages, celebrates diversity and shows respect for children's home languages. Caring staff provide appropriate support for children's changing needs at all stages in readiness for the transition to the next stage of learning. The management of children's behaviour is guided by the 'Cumnor Way', which staff reinforce gently and consistently through the modelling of good behaviour, circle time activities and assemblies. Supportive, positive language and well-planned environments promote co-operation, sharing and independence. Children learn about healthy eating as they enjoy the home-cooked tasty lunches and choose a fruit snack mid-morning. Personal hygiene is given high priority: the personal needs of under-threes are handled sensitively and discreetly; older children are gently reminded to wash their hands before eating. Daily access to outdoor play and other physical exercise reinforces the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Adults know and understand procedures relating to health, safety and safeguarding very well and are extremely diligent in their implementation.

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

- 3.6 Leadership and management in the EYFS are outstanding. Governance, based on close involvement with the setting, is robust. Safer recruitment procedures ensure that the suitability of staff is carefully checked prior to the commencement of employment. A well-organised management structure allows close links between all parts of the setting, careful monitoring of the educational programme and rigorous oversight of provision. Induction procedures are thorough and regular training days keep staff up-to-date with any revisions to policies. Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Strict adherence to health and safety procedures, including supervision of the children, comprehensive daily checks and reporting procedures for potential hazards, ensures the setting is safe and secure. Self-evaluation involves staff at all levels, resulting in clearly defined targets for improvement.
- 3.7 Effective supervision for staff is undertaken, with more formal systems being developed to ensure all key workers are supported. Peer observations allow best practice within the setting to be shared and a well-established appraisal system drives continuous professional development. Productive relationships with parents have a positive impact on children's learning and development, and close links to external agencies, such as speech therapists for those children who need them, and other settings provide valuable support and guidance.

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

- 3.8 The overall quality and standards of the provision are outstanding. All children, including those with EAL, make at least good, and often outstanding progress, with many exceeding the expected levels in all areas of development by the end of the EYFS. Children under the age of three are very well supported, reaching the expected levels of development for their age and, as a result, are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

- 3.9 The youngest children develop good language skills, expressing themselves in an increasingly articulate way as they use puppets independently to retell stories. In Nursery, they become independent as they put on coats and boots for outdoor play. Malleable materials are used creatively to support the development of fine motor skills. Imaginative activities, such as comparing painted footprints, help children to develop mathematical concepts about shape and size. In Reception, children are confident communicators who are clearly proud of their achievements as they perform a Nativity play to parents. Three-year-olds recognise numbers to 10, and in Reception count accurately to much higher numbers, showing an understanding of 1:1 correspondence as they decorate a Christmas tree. Under-threes use a computer mouse with increasing dexterity and good use is made of ICT with older children to make numeracy activities fun and to promote confidence. Children play happily on their own and in small groups. They co-operate and take turns when playing a shopping-list card game. The highly effective key person system enhances children's well-being, and all staff have a secure knowledge of, and responsibility for, safeguarding procedures. As a result children are happy, confident and able to flourish.
- 3.10 Since the previous inspection, partnerships with parents, other settings and outside agencies have been strengthened; opportunities for children to make their own choices have been extended; and the Reception classes have been relocated to the Woodcote Lane site, where the boys enjoy greater access to outdoor learning. Self-evaluation is continuous and comprehensive and, as a result, the capacity for ongoing improvement is very strong.