

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, schools accredited as members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, and those schools belonging to the Cognita Group which are not members of the Independent Schools Council and its constituent associations

INSPECTION REPORT

**INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO
SECTION 109(1) AND (2) OF
THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS ACT 2008**

Name of school:	Oakfields Montessori School
DfE number:	311/6061
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mr Tony Hubbard Supporting Inspectors: Mrs Eileen McAndrew Mr Martin Cragg
Dates of inspection:	3 to 5 February 2015

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Oakfields Montessori School
Address of school:	Harwood Hall Harwood Hall Lane Upminster Essex RM14 2YG
Telephone number:	01708 220117
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Email address:	office@oakfieldsschool.co.uk
Proprietor:	Cognita Group of Schools
Head Teacher:	Mrs Laura Ciftci
DfE number:	311/6011
Type of school:	Independent school
Age range of pupils and students:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Male and female
Total number on roll:	Boys: 89 Girls: 92 (Full-time) (Part-time) Boys: 9 Girls: 11
Number of children under 5:	Boys: 40 Girls: 26
Number of post-16 students:	Boys: 0 Girls: 0
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need:	Boys: 1 Girls: 0
Annual fees:	£2,585 to £2,900
Type of inspection:	Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008
Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector:	Mr Tony Hubbard
Supporting Inspectors:	Mrs Eileen McAndrew Mr Martin Cragg
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SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by SIS and the Cognita Group and agreed with the Department for Education (DfE). It was conducted by independent professional inspectors, who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations.

Information about the school:

Oakfields Montessori School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between three and eleven years of age. It was founded in 1993 and was acquired by the Cognita Group of schools in 2007. The present head teacher took up her post in September 2013. The school occupies a listed building, with some external additions, set in extensive grounds in Upminster, in Essex. It aims to promote academic excellence in a stimulating, safe and supportive environment that encourages confidence, enthusiasm for learning and consideration for others in all its children, including through the promotion of British values. It prepares children for entry to local independent and selective maintained schools. At the time of the inspection, 201 pupils were on roll, evenly divided between female and male. The school had identified fifteen pupils as having special educational needs and/or disability. All speak English at home. The school includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting with sixty-six children, of whom twenty attend the Nursery class part time. The school provides 'wrap around' before and after school care, which is registered with Ofsted.

The school was last inspected in February, 2012.

Summary of main findings:

Oakfields Montessori School provides a consistently good education and has some outstanding features; it fulfils its aims well. It has improved since the inspection of 2012 and is continuing to improve. The curriculum is broad, balanced and well managed in a way that prepares all pupils well for the next stages of their education so that almost all gain entry to their chosen selective schools. The quality of teaching is good and supports the progress of pupils of all abilities. Teachers plan well and make their lessons interesting and lively so that pupils enjoy their lessons and make good progress. They do not always have their understanding fully checked. The school provides suitable and safe 'wrap around' care for pupils before and after school. Standards of literacy and numeracy are high. However, in subjects other than literacy, too much of the recorded work consists of the completion of worksheets. Assessment is accurate and used well to support learning, but marking does not consistently provide guidance for further improvement. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent in all respects, as is their behaviour. Pupils are very well cared for and safeguarded, and are happy in the school. Leadership and management are good and show great strength in the conduct of the planned improvement of the school. The proprietors provide good support and challenge and ensure compliance with all the regulations.

What the school does well:

- recent development of the premises has materially improved the quality of learning;
- the care and development of children in the EYFS setting are outstanding;
- pupils attain high standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6;
- pupils benefit from a broad and enriched curriculum, particularly in the arts, sport and culture;
- pupils are polite, work together very well, and their behaviour is excellent.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

The school meets all the regulations.

What the school must do to comply with the mandatory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

The school meets all the regulations for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What the school must do to comply with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Next Steps:

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

- improve pupils' learning by ensuring that marking provides consistently effective guidance which pupils follow up to make further progress;
- ensure that pupils' strong writing skills are fully employed in work across the curriculum; and
- encourage all teachers to use a full range of questions to assess pupils' understanding and extend their thinking.

SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is of a good quality with significant strengths. It is extremely well enriched, both within and beyond the classroom. It ensures that all pupils have a broad learning experience, which includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), religious education (RE) and French. Children in the EYFS setting receive a broad and balanced diet of the seven areas of learning. The quality of the curriculum strongly supports the good and sometimes very good achievement of pupils. It strikes a very good balance between the need for a broad and enriching experience to prepare pupils for life in British society and the important preparation of pupils for success in their applications for entry to secondary schools.

The National Curriculum programmes of study provide the curricular content and help to ensure continuity of study and a progressive learning experience for pupils alongside age-related expectations against which to assess pupils' progress and attainment. The school has had regard to recent changes to the National Curriculum and in Key Stage 1 these changes have been effectively implemented. Work is in progress in Key Stage 2 to amend the curriculum, while retaining elements, such as some historical topics, which have proved highly successful in developing pupils' learning. A range of good-quality published materials and school-produced resources effectively supports curriculum planning.

Planning throughout the school is clear, economical, methodical and consistent. This systematic approach enables staff to implement the curriculum effectively. The yearly Curriculum Overview usefully sets out the topics in science and the foundation subjects which will be taught in each year group, helping to ensure a balanced coverage without repetition or omission. The overview for English and mathematics clarifies specifically which areas of learning in these core subjects will be taught in each week across the three terms. This helps teachers to structure learning effectively so that pupils will achieve the expected learning outcomes by the end of the year. In addition, a Yearly Topic Overview sets out the topics across all subjects in each term as a useful pointer to possible cross-curricular links. Teachers use this to help pupils to understand how learning in one subject can support and extend learning in other areas of the curriculum. Medium-term planning creates effective, progressive schemes of work for each subject, setting out how a specific topic will be developed over a given time. The format varies slightly between subjects but all are suitable for their purpose, identifying what will be taught and learned, the range of activities, resources and the success criteria through which learning can be assessed. Within the broad curriculum there is scope for teachers to shape the provision within the topics to make the best use of their individual pedagogical strengths and to set the expected learning outcomes into the context of the interests of pupils in their class. Planning is effectively supported and monitored by senior staff.

Specialist provision in music, art, information and communication technology (ICT), French and sport enhance the curricular provision. Aesthetic aspects such as art and music are particularly prominent, as is provision for sport. About a third of the pupils learn instrumental music including the violin, guitar, clarinet and keyboard.

Pupils have regular opportunities through the choir and orchestra to use their increasing skills in performances for other pupils and the community. The wide range of individual and team sports offered as clubs ensures that all pupils have the chance to engage with specific sports of their choosing, alongside the usual curricular provision. This gives them opportunities to increase and refine particular physical skills and to participate in team games and compete against pupils in neighbouring schools.

Literacy and numeracy are given a consistently high priority, building on the very good foundations laid in the Kindergarten. This strong emphasis contributes to the pupils' good and sometimes very good progress in these areas. Pupils develop as articulate and fluent speakers, eager to participate in lessons and increasingly able to express opinions or argue points of view with confidence and maturity. Work towards the English Speaking Board examinations extends and enhances pupils' learning in literacy, particularly in speaking, reading and the skills of recitation. Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. It is very effectively fostered through the ethos and culture of the school, work in PSHCE, assemblies and enrichment in the curriculum. As a consequence, pupils' personal development is excellent and they are well prepared for the next phase of their development.

Provision for pupils with learning needs or disabilities is good. The recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has assumed this responsibility and procedures are clear and well understood. Good links exist between the SENCOs for the main school and the EYFS. The learning needs of identified pupils are addressed directly through differentiated provision within the classroom. Pupils have individual education plans which are monitored by the SENCO. These are of good quality, with short-term, manageable targets which are regularly reviewed. Support observed during lessons from teachers and from teaching assistants was consistently good. More able pupils are also the responsibility of the SENCO. Currently the school addresses their needs through the strong quality enrichment within the curriculum and with acceleration for pupils for whom this is appropriate.

The school has successfully developed outstanding enrichment of the curriculum as an integral part of pupils' overall learning experience. Enrichment permeates provision because teachers plan a wide range of imaginative and engaging experiences to bring the curriculum to life. For example, classes have the opportunity in history to recreate a day in the life of people from whichever era they are studying, whether Ancient Egypt or Victorian England. The school uses its proximity to London to access the myriad cultural resources of the capital, through regular visits to galleries, theatres and museums. For example, Year 6 pupils visited the Globe theatre having had a breath-taking performance of *Macbeth* performed for them in school, while younger pupils experienced visiting road shows on subjects such as Minibeasts, Florence Nightingale and the Great Fire of London. A strong feature of the enrichment of the curriculum is the extension of provision through the varied range of good-quality lunchtime and after-school activities. This dimension gives all pupils imaginative opportunities for a range of creative, expressive and sporting activities, such as ICT, gardening, art, playing in the orchestra or joining the choir. In discussions with pupils, many mentioned their gratitude for these additional activities, which bring them much enjoyment as well as a sense of achievement.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Teaching has some outstanding features. Teachers enable pupils to acquire new knowledge and to make good progress according to their ability. They have good and, in the best examples, excellent subject knowledge, which they use effectively to plan lessons so that pupils deepen understanding and extend their skills. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics. Teachers set clear learning objectives in every lesson and provide criteria by which success can be judged. By the end of Year 6, the school's results in Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) are well above the national average and this represents significant progress from their starting points, especially in mathematics. By the end of Year 2, attainment is also above average, although stronger in English than mathematics. An increasing proportion of children are successful in 11+ and other entrance examinations. Almost all gained entry to their preferred selective secondary school in 2014.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection in 2012. It is now strongest in the EYFS, where all the teaching was at least good and much excellent, and in the upper years. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They show interest in subjects and enjoy working together. Older pupils are self-motivated and can organise their learning independently whether alone or collaborating in groups. For example, Year 6 pupils helped each other to prepare presentations for the English Speaking Board assessment. Younger pupils get on well with others and respond well to teachers' guidance and instructions. Relationships in classrooms and pupils' behaviour are excellent. They respond quickly when teachers remind them of expectations and quickly act on routines for silence and attention. Teachers promote important British values such as respect, tolerance and understanding of right and wrong. All pupils are equally valued in the school, as reflected in its general ethos.

Teachers plan lessons which challenge the most able children. Those children preparing for the 11+ test in a pre-school session enjoyed composing paragraphs for a story following on from earlier paragraphs written by their peers. This required them to think carefully about person, tense, narrative progression and style. The teacher set high expectations for subject knowledge and application of skills. Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils who find learning more difficult, often using simpler resources with them or adjusting the task to suit their needs. However, occasionally, all pupils complete the same tasks without any extra assistance or extension. Sessions taught to smaller groups by teaching assistants are also effective and pupils make good progress. Teachers use a range of resources to support learning, including projectors and visualisers. However, in some subjects, there is too much reliance on worksheets, some of which require pupils to do relatively little writing and fill gaps from a word bank or colour in outlines of maps.

In the best lessons, teachers use a range of questions to assess whether children understand their work and to reveal and remove any lurking misconceptions. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher carefully questioned pupils to establish that they had correct methods to convert fractions into equivalent percentages and then to calculate percentage increase or decrease. Pupils demonstrated this effectively but the process also highlighted where possible confusion might arise. In other lessons, teachers' use of questions focused mostly on factual recall rather than promoting thought or explanation. As a result, they missed opportunities to probe, correct or extend pupils' understanding.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide feedback on how they might improve. However, this marking is not yet consistent. In the best examples, teachers provide clear 'next steps' to help pupils make their work better. Pupils are often expected to respond by correcting errors, practising or applying skills. This is not yet routine across the school and, therefore, pupils do not get full benefit from teachers' comments. Marking in non-core subjects is not as rigorous as in English.

The system for assessing pupils' attainment and recording their progress is excellent. Pupils' progress is compared with national expectations and their own targets. Teachers have a clear understanding of who is at, above or below their target. This information is used effectively to inform teachers' planning and to focus support for those who are working below expectations. Teachers use a full range of tests to establish pupils' spelling and reading levels, and their performance in writing, mathematics and science. Assessment data are accurate. Pupils' attainment and progress are communicated to parents through detailed mid-term and end-of-term reports, and at Parents' Evenings.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 2 - The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The provision helps pupils from the EYFS onwards to develop their sense of self and other, which supports them toward becoming reflective, empathetic and open individuals. Spiritual development is strongly fostered through provision in RE, music and art, giving pupils a growing appreciation of beauty in the natural world alongside the achievements of humankind in the creative and expressive arts. The high quality of their work in these areas is evident in a recent exhibition of pupils' art and in the quality of their musical performance. Pupils develop self-confidence and self-esteem because they feel that they are valued as unique individual members of the school family. As a result of the positive support they receive from staff and peers, they have confidence in themselves and are sensitive to the feelings of others. As one child said, 'We all have a part to play and older children have a responsibility to look out for the little ones'. Teachers reiterate the importance of courtesy and attention to the needs of others in pupils' behaviour from the Kindergarten onwards, providing a context of moral and social responsibility. They set an example in their own treatment of their pupils. Pupils develop an understanding of the work of charities in addressing issues such as homelessness, specific illness, poverty, and environmental issues. They participate with eagerness and enthusiasm in raising funds for charities and speak knowledgeably about their contribution.

The curriculum in PSHCE helps pupils to become aware of and exercise their capacity to make choices which affect themselves and others. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They value learning and concentrate on the tasks they are set. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. In discussions with inspectors pupils spoke about the value of the house system and house points for good work or behaviour as incentives to good conduct. They were able to see the value to themselves as individuals and showed a growing sense of responsibility to others in their house to do their best.

Pupils' social development is nurtured from the Kindergarten, where they learn to take turns as they play together, throughout the school where they have opportunities to work cooperatively and collaboratively. Pupils become skilled at contributing to each other's learning and swift to celebrate each other's success. Members of the school council gave strikingly altruistic and socially responsible reasons for wanting that office. They explained that they had talents they wanted to use to contribute ideas for improvements and they felt that they could help other children. The wide range of sporting activities and competitions give pupils opportunities to meet pupils from other schools both within and outside the Cognita group of schools. Pupils said they greatly enjoyed playing other teams and clearly felt relaxed and confident in moving out into the wider world as representatives of their school.

Pupils' cultural development is excellent. The school takes full advantage of the cultural diversity of its community. Parents enrich pupils' understanding by visiting the school to discuss and explore religious and domestic aspects of their heritages and cultural values with the pupils. RE, history and geography contribute strongly to pupils' appreciation of similarities and differences between different faiths, regions and times. Assemblies help to extend and consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding through the celebration of festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year, while visits to local places of worship add immediacy to pupils' learning. The cultural diversity of the school community allows all pupils to develop a sense of equality regardless of ethnicity or religious belief. Pupils treat each other with respect whether in the classroom or around the school.

The school's aims explicitly include the promotion of British values. The curriculum in PSHCE specifically introduces the youngest pupils to the wider society of modern-day Britain through topics on 'people who help us' and through visits from local services such as the police and the fire and rescue service. As they move through the school, work expands to include more complex concepts, which the school actively promotes, such as human rights, the rule of law, and democracy. In Year 6, for example, fascinating work was planned around a visit to the Houses of Parliament, which included meeting the member for the school's constituency. A workshop organised to mirror parliamentary conventions gave pupils insights into European and global issues, alongside greater understanding of the functions of national political parties and the Houses of Lords and Commons.

The school is mindful to ensure that no partisan political views are promoted in any of its activities in or outside the school. Visitors to the school are carefully chosen and their contributions thoroughly discussed and agreed prior to the visit.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The arrangements to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The school has adapted Cognita's comprehensive safeguarding and child protection policies, which have careful regard to all current guidance issued by the Department for Education. They include all regulatory requirements and provide clear and helpful guidance for staff in protecting pupils' well-being and safety. The school fulfils the requirements to have a designated safeguarding lead person and a deputy. Both have completed the necessary higher level training for the lead role, as

have a number of other staff including the headteacher. These include the EYFS manager, who is the designated lead practitioner for the setting, clearly identified for parents. As a result, the well-being and safety of children are strongly promoted in the school and procedures are publicised widely, including names and photographs of key staff who would deal with any child protection concerns. Safeguarding training is part of the induction programme for new staff and all staff are expected to update this training regularly and to confirm that they have done so. Confidential records are stored securely and reviewed according to published guidelines.

There is a strong ethos of care in the school. Pupils are known individually by staff. A boy who was new to the school said, 'I feel I belong here. I really feel welcome.' Pupils know to whom to speak if they have any concerns. They say that they feel safe in the school and this is confirmed by those parents who returned questionnaires. The school has a clear behaviour policy, with a set of rules, rewards and sanctions. Serious cases of misbehaviour are rare. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Children show care and concern for each other and get on well. There is effective staff supervision of breaks and lunchtimes. Movement around the building is controlled and orderly. The school has an effective anti-bullying policy and responds promptly in the few cases where issues are raised, as pupils confirm. Pupils understand what bullying is and are aware of its different forms. They receive information on safe and healthy choices from visitors such as fire, health and medical professionals and in science, PE and PSHCE. All pupils are used to choosing from a good range of healthy lunchtime options. Pupils take full advantage of the extensive school grounds for vigorous exercise at break times. In the EYFS they learn to grow, harvest and eat their own vegetables.

The school promotes health and safety strongly and assesses risks so that practical measures can be taken to minimise any untoward incidents. Vehicle access to the site is supervised and drop-offs are made safely with pupils greeted directly by staff at the main entrance to the school. In addition to being safe, this strategy provides a warm welcome and an opportunity for parents to pass messages to teachers. Very thorough procedures apply when children walk to local places of interest or events. The school institutes all the necessary checks on services and fire equipment. There are regular practice fire evacuations and a fire warden for each area of the building. First-aid arrangements meet requirements and there are many trained staff and first-aid kits in each classroom.

The school maintains an accurate admission register, records attendance appropriately and has efficient systems for following up concerns over punctuality, absence and illness. Patterns of absence are reviewed in case they raise other concerns about the child's welfare or safety. There is a plan to fulfil the duties under the Equalities Act and to improve access to the buildings as appropriate.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 4 - Suitability of the staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school's arrangements for checking the suitability of all staff, volunteers and proprietors are scrupulously thorough and rigorously overseen by Cognita. All required checks are carried out. Checks on agency and self-employed staff, including the kitchen staff and 'wrap-around' carers are properly completed. The safer recruitment procedures and the single central register have been adjusted to reflect the latest requirements and guidance. Checklists are maintained to confirm that each required check has been carried out at the appropriate time and included with the relevant staff file. All requests for references include formal questions about the suitability of the applicant for working with children. All teaching and non-teaching applicants are interviewed by a panel of which one member has a current qualification in safer recruitment. All interviews include a specific safeguarding question and a record of the interview is kept on file.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school occupies a listed building in seven acres of planning land. As a consequence, its development and expansion are subject to restrictions. The site is secure and pleasant, and the premises are conducive to pupils' effective learning. Pupils have full use of the hard and grassed areas for play and physical education. Since the last inspection, improvements to the Kindergarten facilities have materially improved children's learning by the creation of efficiently used fully open plan indoor spaces linked to substantial, well-equipped outdoor areas. Teachers take every opportunity to make classrooms attractive and stimulating areas for learning with colourful and helpful displays. There are good facilities for art, music and ICT. Drinking water is available from separate water fountains. The music room provides adequate space for the Sunrise and Sunset club in the wrap-around care. There is a first aid room and sufficient toilet facilities, some of which have recently been refurbished.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 6 - The quality of information for parents

The provision of information to parents is good. Parents are an integral part of the school community. They are kept well informed and are made warmly welcome. The school's website is clear, comprehensive and well designed. It is thoughtfully set out so as to make finding specific information completely straightforward, with a clear outline of the school's ethos and aims and simple headings with drop down lists of relevant items, such as standards achieved, curriculum, school calendar and newsletters. The wide range of school policies which underpin its provision are readily available on the website and also in the school office. This helps parents to be aware of matters such as the measures taken to help ensure the safety of their children, as well as giving them information on procedures such as assessment and reporting and policies to support personal development.

The *Oakleaves* newsletter, published every two to three weeks, gives a valuable and lively insight into the aspects such as current curricular themes, enrichment activities and visits out of school, alongside the celebration of individual or group achievement. In addition, each class produces a half-termly newsletter for parents, which reflects the work and related activities of the particular class. The *Acorn Newsletters* from the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) allows direct communication between the committee and the wider parent community. This newsletter highlights the work of the PTA and helps to inform parents about their specific projects undertaken to contribute financial support to the school.

The great majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the education it provides for their children. A small number of parents indicated that they would like more information about their child's progress. Inspectors found that parents have many opportunities to learn of their children's progress. In addition to termly parents' evenings and full reports twice a year, the school operates a genuine open door policy, so that parents can arrange to speak to a teacher, or meet them informally at the school gate. The reports are of good quality, giving precise information in each subject about the pupils' strengths and areas for improvement.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 7 - The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The complaints procedure is available to parents on the website and is in line with requirements. Only one formal complaint was received in the last twelve months and this was resolved in accordance with the policy.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 8 - The quality and effectiveness of leadership in and management of schools

The quality of leadership and management is good. The head teacher's clear and ambitious vision for the active promotion of the academic success, personal development and well-being of all the pupils is fully shared by all management and staff. This, coupled with a clear understanding of how the performance of the school should be achieved, has led to improving quality and standards for pupils of all abilities. As a result, the school is making good progress towards its ambitious goals for academic excellence to match the excellence in personal development already achieved. Roles are clearly delegated and are understood and effectively exercised by leaders and managers at all levels. Leadership is working effectively to develop the school's middle management and is aware that there is more to be done. Clear policies and procedures are established, monitored and reviewed. The leadership has been careful to adapt Cognita policies, for example, for safeguarding, to the requirements of the school's own location and circumstances. The proprietor, through its Education Executive, exercises rigorous oversight. It audits the school's arrangements for safeguarding children scrupulously and ensures the school's full compliance with all the requirements for independent schools and for EYFS. Management is effective in recruiting well-qualified staff and in supporting and

developing them professionally. The monitoring of teaching, learning and care is thorough and provides a realistic picture of quality and progress towards the school's objectives. Appraisal is well established and all learning and administrative staff feel well supported and are provided with both in-house and external training, as necessary. Improvement and development planning is intelligent, well rooted in evaluation, robustly financed and effectively carried out and monitored. The school's work is supported effectively by highly efficient administrative services.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

SECTION C: EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall quality and standards of the Early Years' provision

The quality and standards of the early years' provision are outstanding. A significant feature across the EYFS is the skilful support given to the children by all staff so that they make extremely good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The majority of the children meet national expectations by the end of the Reception year. Many exceed these expectations and continue to develop their literacy and mathematical skills and knowledge ready for the transition into Year 1. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are sensitively supported and cared for, while those ready to move forward receive full encouragement. The children relish their time at school and show that they feel secure and happy. The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS, including the required background checks on staff, are fully met. The EYFS team, very effectively led by the EYFS manager and deputy manager and supported by the head teacher, are extremely well organised and leadership supports well-qualified and dedicated staff through professional development, parental liaison, classroom practices and strong, well-targeted resourcing. As a result, the setting has improved from satisfactory to outstanding in the three years since its last inspection and is continuing to improve.

How well the Early Years' provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The early years' provision meets the needs of the range of children at the school extremely well and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Almost all children reach the expected levels of development and a majority exceed them. From the beginning of Nursery, children develop particularly good social and emotional skills as, with firm and sensitive encouragement of their key workers, they learn to share, take turns and think of others, while the older pupils can plan and co-operate without adult interference. Their listening, speaking and vocabulary develop very well and, as soon as they are ready, they begin to make marks and link early understanding of literacy to growing fine control, until they begin to write their names and recognise words. Their physical development is extremely well developed both indoors in their activities out of doors, in which they learn to climb, balance, cycle and explore, building at the same time their understanding of the world, hunting for worms in their little plant bed with big plastic rakes and magnifying glasses. Children choose and apply colour with striking concentration. They move on to the Reception classes, confident and ready for the transition to more intensive and formal literacy and numeracy, while continuity of learning through play is maintained by the periods of free-flow indoor and outdoor activity, supported by the highly effective functioning of the two stages as a single unit, led by the EYFS manager. Children's phonic skills develop strongly through a commercial phonics programme and they apply these to increasingly confident reading and writing, each at the appropriate individual pace. Children make excellent progress in mathematics, are able to count well beyond 20, to add on and to begin to recognise patterns of number and shape. They move well onto more formal learning about the world in their work on science and begin to understand about fair tests, as in an experiment comparing time taken to melt ice under different conditions. They learn to coordinate their movements and gradually to pitch their voices or to beat out the rhythm to nursery rhymes played by the teacher on a guitar. They listen intently to their teachers and respond quickly to the occasional reminders. This is because, throughout the EYFS, the staff expect the best from their children in a way that is supportive but, where needed, firm. The children respond by being enthusiastic and increasingly able to focus their attention

both alone and in groups. Their development is extremely well supported by the excellent links between school and family, apparent in the home-school books, which show many examples of parents and carers learning of and reinforcing new steps taken by their children.

The contribution of the Early Years' provision to children's well-being

The contribution of the early years' provision to children's well-being is outstanding. Children show evident trust and security in their key workers and teachers. They thoroughly enjoy their time in the setting. They form secure emotional attachments and learn to consider the feelings of others in the scrupulously safe environment of the Kindergarten. They are well behaved and learn to share and to respect the feelings of others. On occasions when selfishness surfaces, tears or temper are resolved with great skill and affection. Children show increasing ability to plan and discuss co-operatively and to work independently, in a way that makes them well prepared for the more formal timetables from Year 1 onwards. A good balance is struck between vigorous exercise, indoors and out and in all weathers, and quiet time for relaxation. Snack times and meal times are friendly and civilised occasions and the children become used to a healthy diet, also promoted well through the curriculum. They learn the importance of proper hygiene. Children in the Nursery usually remember to wash their hands and only occasionally need a reminder. Strong links between Reception and Year 1 smooth the transition from early years to formal school, and children share some of its facilities and are taught by some of its teachers, as in French and music, and use the library and computer facilities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years' provision

The leadership and management of the EYFS setting are outstanding both in ensuring the learning and development of all the children and in promoting and safeguarding their well-being. The setting delegates responsibility very fully and effectively, with an EYFS manager and deputy manager, as well as an EYFS SENCO and co-ordinators for each area of learning and for behaviour. This enables the Kindergarten to operate as almost a single unit despite the physical separation of Nursery from Reception. Roles are fully understood and planning, review and improvement are carried out constantly and rigorously. The impact of changes is always quickly evaluated and further adjustments set in place. This is evident in the high quality of the development plan and its clear impact, most strikingly on the physical development of the outdoor and indoor spaces. This has transformed the quality of provision compared with that criticised in 2012, because the management and staff planned its use so well. They give full and effective priority to promoting and safety, well-being and development of each child. The recruitment and support of staff in the department is excellent. Management and peer observation are well established and the head teacher directly and effectively oversees and supports the setting. The EYFS manager plays a full part in the management of the whole school, and the co-ordination of accurate assessment for the school as a whole is carried out by a member of the EYFS team. The specialist staff are very well deployed and supported, as seen in the excellent match of specialist physical education coaching to the needs of early years' children. Self-evaluation is a strength of the management. The constant assessment carried out by staff in the Nursery and Reception classes support the setting's accurate overall assessment profiles and has allowed closer analysis of strengths and weaknesses for individuals, areas of learning and groups of children and is beginning to be very effectively used. Links with parents are outstanding.

Does the school meet the mandatory requirements?

Yes.

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools belonging to the Cognita Group which are not members of the Independent Schools Council and its constituent associations. Further copies of the report are available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk