



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**GEMS SHERFIELD**

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## GEMS Sherfield

Full Name of School	<b>GEMS Sherfield</b>		
DfE Number	<b>850/6084</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY293642</b>		
Address	<b>GEMS Sherfield</b> <b>Reading Road</b> <b>Sherfield on Loddon</b> <b>Hook</b> <b>Hampshire</b> <b>RG27 0HU</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01256 884800</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01256 883172</b>		
Email Address	<b>info@sherfieldschool.co.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Richard Jaine</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Martin Clark</b>		
Age Range	<b>0 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>428</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (236 boys; 192 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>48</b>	5-11: <b>114</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>54</b>	11-18: <b>212</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mr Greg Meakin</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>01 Oct 2014 to 02 Oct 2014</b>		

## 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 October 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.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted informal discussions with children and examined samples of work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, 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**

Mrs Angela Russell

Mrs Frances Willacy

Early Years Lead Inspector

Team Inspector for Early Years

(Former Head of Junior School, IAPS school)

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 SUMMARY</b>	<b>2</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	2
<b>3 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>3</b>
(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	3
(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being	3
(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision	4
(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision	4

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 GEMS Sherfield is a co-educational boarding school for boys and girls from three months to eighteen years of age and was founded in September 2004. It is part of Global Education Management Systems Limited (GEMS) who manage seven schools in Europe, of which five are in the United Kingdom (UK). The school is governed by the GEMS governance board which also has oversight of the other schools in the UK. The head teacher took up his post in September 2012.
- 1.2 The school aims to be a first-class, sustainable extended independent school with excellent academic and personal education consistent with the needs of each pupil. It also aims for the GEMS core values of world citizenship; universal values; leadership and forward thinking to underpin all aspects of the school.
- 1.3 GEMS Sherfield is situated in Sherfield-on-Loddon in Hampshire between Basingstoke and Reading, on a site of 75 acres. The school reflects the diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the area with most pupils coming from professional or business backgrounds. Children up to the age of three are based in Little Gems Nursery, a single building next to the main school. Children age three to five years have classrooms in the main school. Since the previous inspection the youngest children, known as Rubies, have moved to the Little Gems Nursery building and are now fully integrated into the Nursery.
- 1.4 There are 428 pupils on roll (236 boys and 192 girls) of whom 102 are aged from 3 months to 5 years and are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Forty-eight of these children are under three years of age. Attendance in the EYFS can be on a flexible part-time basis until children join the Reception class at the age of four when they can attend full-time.
- 1.5 Three children in the EYFS are being monitored for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are eleven pupils in the EYFS who speak English as an additional language (EAL).
- 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
Rubies 1	Nursery (ages 3 months to 20 months)
Rubies 2	Nursery (ages 20 months to 24 months)
Amethysts	Nursery (ages 2 years to 3 years)
Sapphires and Emeralds	Nursery (ages 3 years to 4 years)
Reception	Reception (ages 4 years to 5 years)

## **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) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Provide regular opportunities for the older Nursery classes to celebrate and share their achievements together.
  2. Ensure that all documentation for the EYFS is consistent in terminology and content.

### **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 makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Stimulating classrooms along with excellent outdoor areas provide many opportunities to explore and play independently. Several unique programmes, including a world languages programme, enhance the curriculum. Excellent provision in all areas of learning enables children to reach and at times exceed the level of development typical for their age.
- 3.2 Through expert assessment and use of observations staff are able to identify next steps for each child and ensure that they are ready for the next stage in their learning. Adults spend quality time talking with children under three to encourage them in their language development. Opportunities are provided for the youngest children to explore and develop their physical skills, such as when building with blocks. For children over three specialist physical education (PE) lessons provide opportunities to learn new skills. A wide range of practical activities provides constant challenge, for example when hunting for natural shapes in the outdoor environment. The effective teaching of phonics helps children to develop their proficiency in literacy.
- 3.3 High-quality teaching takes children's needs and interests into account, enabling them to make outstanding progress. Adults have high expectations and skilfully motivate children to learn. Children with SEND and/or EAL, for whom there is excellent support, acquire the necessary skills to achieve well and make excellent progress.
- 3.4 Partnerships with parents are outstanding. Valuable communication between home and school enables children to feel secure. Staff are available to speak to parents at the beginning and end of each day and detailed information about each child's achievements and progress is regularly shared. Family photographs shared from home, and opportunities to take part in activity mornings with their child, also provide strong links. Links with parents are strengthened through the parents' association.
- 3.5 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire the majority of parents expressed a high level of satisfaction. In discussions with inspectors parents were extremely positive in their praise of the school.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of the provision to the children's well-being is outstanding. Well-qualified and dedicated staff provide excellent support, enabling children to form very strong bonds and feel secure. Staff welcome children warmly, helping them to settle well. Care practices ensure that children of all ages are very happy. Excellent behaviour enables highly effective learning.
- 3.7 Children under three are known extremely well by their key person who recognises their unique qualities. Adults reinforce turn-taking and achievements are recognised, enabling children to develop their self-esteem. They play co-operatively and develop independence during snack times, when they make their own choices.

During dinosaur hunts children are encouraged to use their imagination. Staff caring for children over three value and support the decisions they make, thus encouraging their self-confidence. Reception children attend assemblies with older children when special awards are given for values such as kindness. However, there are limited opportunities for the older Nursery classes to celebrate their achievements together.

- 3.8 Daily access to the extensive outdoor areas encourages all children to understand the importance of physical exercise. They are taught about healthy eating and become increasingly independent with regard to personal hygiene and self-care. During PE lessons older children learn to dress themselves. Strong induction procedures enable children to feel safe and cared for. As children move through the setting support by their key person ensures excellent transitions between classes.

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

- 3.9 Leadership and management in the EYFS are outstanding. The governors are actively involved in the life of the school and provide excellent support. Adults oversee the educational programmes, monitor teaching and evaluate provision very effectively. Strong working relationships between those with management responsibilities for the EYFS enable excellent links between all year groups. The setting meets its aims to provide an education that is consistent with the needs of each child.
- 3.10 Induction for new staff is comprehensive and recruitment procedures follow all necessary requirements. Records are all included in a single central register which is correctly compiled. All policies, including those for safeguarding, are regularly reviewed and their implementation monitored. However, policies and other documents across the EYFS do not always provide consistent terminology and information. Staff are reflective practitioners and self-evaluation, to which all staff contribute, is of a high quality. This results in a clear, shared vision for the future, with realistic targets which show a strong commitment to improvement.
- 3.11 Robust systems are in place for performance management and staff supervision procedures. Staff are well qualified and their further training needs are identified, often following appraisal. This has a positive impact on the learning and development of the children. For example, as a result of attending a training course about supporting language development, practitioners have provided cosy spaces where children can develop their conversation skills together. Training in safeguarding, child protection, first aid and health and safety is up to date.
- 3.12 Provision for children with additional needs is extremely well managed, and excellent partnerships with the local authority, other outside agencies and parents ensure that children receive the support they need.

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

- 3.13 The overall quality and standards of the provision are outstanding. All children, including those with EAL make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. Children under three achieve extremely well in the prime areas of learning. They understand simple sentences and respond well to instructions. They gradually improve their ability to use and control a variety of small tools such as a knife and fork and when printing with small objects. They expertly create movement in response to music when pretending to be butterflies.

- 3.14 Children over three listen with increased concentration and become confident communicators. They solve problems when following visual instructions to build large 3D shapes and can recognise and describe the properties of shapes. They develop skills for the future when using tablet computers to match digits to the number of objects on the screen. Children develop an excellent understanding of the wider world when they take part in activities such as a sponsored walk for guide dogs.
- 3.15 Children's excellent behaviour is a feature of their outstanding personal and emotional development. They respond to guidelines, play well together and are extremely happy as they make new choices. Children learn to share resources and take turns. They leave their carers confidently, feeling safe in the setting. Adults have a shared understanding of how to protect children and are diligent in ensuring that children are always well supervised. Safeguarding and welfare procedures are well known by all staff. Highly effective self-evaluation of the setting's practices secures continuous improvement and provides a clear vision for the future.
- 3.16 All recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed. Additional resources for the youngest Nursery children have enabled more opportunities for investigative learning, and transitions into the older Nursery classes have been strengthened.