

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 162A
OF THE EDUCATION ACT 2002**

Name of school:	Meoncross
DfE number:	850/6026
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mr Tony Hubbard Supporting Inspectors: Dr Martin Bradley Mr Ted Cohn Mr Mike Thirkell
Dates of inspection:	25 to 27 March 2014

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Meoncross

Address of school: Burnt House Lane,
Stubbington,
Hampshire
PO14 2EF

Telephone number: 01329 662182

Fax number: 01329 664680

Email address: enquiries@meoncross.co.uk

Proprietor: Cognita

Name of Headmistress: Mrs Jennifer Clough

DfE number: 8506026

Type of school: Independent school

Age range of pupils and students: 2½ to 16

Gender of pupils: Male and female

Total number on roll: (Full-time) Boys 166 Girls: 157
(Part-time) Boys: 21 Girls: 31

Number of children under 5: Boys: 20 Girls: 31

Number of post-16 students: Boys: 0 Girls: 0

Number of pupils with statements of special educational need: Boys: 0 Girls: 0

Annual fees: £7,905 to £10,125

Type of inspection: Section 162A of the Education Act 2002

Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector: Mr Tony Hubbard

Supporting Inspectors: Dr Martin Bradley
Mr Ted Cohn
Mr Mike Thirkell

Dates of inspection: 25 to 27 March 2014

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service in accordance with Section 162(A) (1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by 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. Inspectors looked at agreed aspects of the school's management and ethos. These findings are summarised in Section C of this document, but this section is not a statutory part of the inspection process.

Information about the school:

Meoncross is an independent day school for boys and girls between the ages of two and sixteen. It includes a registered nursery setting, separately inspected at the time of this inspection. The school was founded in 1953, and acquired by the Cognita group of schools in 2004. The school is situated in a residential area of Stubbington, near Fareham in Hampshire. There are 375 pupils on roll, with more or less equal numbers of boys and girls. The school takes in new pupils in Year 7. At the end of Year 11 pupils progress to local sixth forms. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. Entry to Year 7 involves an examination. The school wishes all its pupils to realise their full academic potential, to become intellectually and culturally curious and adventurous, and to feel secure and confident about themselves and in society. The school is completing a reorganisation from the division into Infant, Junior and Senior Schools, as currently reflected on its website, to a Lower School for pupils from Nursery to Year 6 and an Upper School for pupils from Year 7 to Year 11.

Summary of main findings:

Meoncross provides excellent education and care for its pupils and meets its aims and ethos extremely well. It has significantly improved the quality of all its provision and has made good progress in addressing the two recommendations made at the last inspection. The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned. It has outstanding features in its continuity, flexibility and coherence. The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding. Teachers and learning assistants know and cater for different individual needs consistently well, so that pupils of all abilities and talents make very good progress from the Nursery upwards. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their work and work hard. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils are well behaved. They are being helped to develop into thoughtful, reflective, confident and independent young people who take readily and effectively to the many opportunities for personal and collective responsibility. They have a strong social sense and understand the significance of diversity of faith and background in the wider community. The quality of welfare, health and safety is excellent. Arrangements for securing health and safety are meticulously thorough, as are those for child protection. Pastoral care is a great strength. Parents express strong support for the work of the school. Leadership and management are highly effective.

What the school does well:

- the overall quality and standards of the early years provision are outstanding;

- the quality of speaking, listening, reading and writing are high;
- pupils respond readily to every opportunity for learning;
- assessment procedures and the monitoring of pupils' progress are rigorous;
and
- it develops and supports its teachers very well.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

The school complies with all the regulations.

Next Steps:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might consider the following point for development:

- making sure that developments in the school are promptly and consistently reflected in information and documentation provided to staff and parents.

SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. Its breadth, balance and diversity enable its pupils to leave the school as well educated young people, well prepared for the next stages of their education and lives. It has some excellent and distinctive features. The school has a clearly expressed and appropriate curriculum policy. Over the past two years the curriculum provision and its organisation and delivery have been comprehensively reviewed and developed to unite the provision in the Nursery, infants, junior and senior provision in to a single 'school of one'. This process is nearing completion and has been accomplished with considerable success.

The youngest pupils follow all the requirements for early years. The development of language and communication is emphasised from the earliest stages in the school and sustained and developed throughout the rest of the school, so that pupils become highly articulate speakers. Literacy and numeracy are successfully promoted across the curriculum and throughout the school. The strong emphasis on phonic skills in Reception and Key Stage 1 and the attention to writing in all subjects as pupils develop result in excellent reading skills and extensive writing of extremely high quality. Pupils acquire secure foundations in numeracy. The core of English, mathematics and science is continued by all pupils from Year 1 to GCSE at the end of Year 11, together with well planned programmes of physical education (PE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE). The effective teaching of French from Nursery upwards enables pupils to attain a high standard of spoken and written French by the time they enter Year 7, when almost all pupils study three languages till the end of Year 9 and continue to GCSE with at least one of these. From Year 1, information and communication technology (ICT) is taught as a separate subject, and all pupils complete an external qualification in ICT at the end of Year 9. History, geography and religious studies are studied from Year 1 to the end of Year 9, after which all continue with at least one of these to GCSE. Good provision is made for creative and aesthetic subjects from Nursery to the end of Year 9, and pupils continue with at least one creative subject to GCSE at the end of Year 11. The school has not, however, yet fulfilled its plans to provide a wider fully balanced range of technology subjects, including resistant materials, for which it lacks the necessary facilities. From Year 10, almost all pupils study nine or more subjects to GCSE, including the core subjects, a choice of one each of a foreign language, a humanity and an aesthetic practical subject, and one 'free' choice from seventeen available options. In addition, all pupils gain a qualification in first-aid by the end of Year 9.

The planning of the curriculum has been substantially improved since the inspection of 2008 and now all the teaching of all subjects is supported by appropriate formal schemes of work. These make clear the development of skills, knowledge and understanding, consolidated for the whole school to reflect the one school policy. The best are beginning to map links across subjects. However, the school is aware that this process is not complete and that the detail and depth of schemes of work are inconsistent. Moreover, not all the information about long-term planning provided on the website and handbooks for parents have kept up with the pace of development. For example, the wording for coverage in French now substantially understates the level at which French is being taught in Year 7. The management

and monitoring of lesson planning is outstandingly rigorous, supportive and effective. As a result teachers' planning, while economical, ensures that clearly communicated objectives are articulated, reviewed and assessed, and that the priority for supporting those with learning needs and challenging the talented are explicitly planned, even to the production of separate individual lessons plans for learning support assistants.

The curriculum is well supported by excursions and visits and by a good range of co-curricular activities, particularly strong in drama and music, in which all pupils begin to study a musical instrument in the Lower School. Team games are highly developed and in some sports pupils enjoy notable success against teams from much larger schools. An outstanding feature in its provision is the weekly late afternoon devoted to its 'passport' programme, devised to bring the whole school together in activities that contribute equally to academic and personal development. The programmes are of high quality and energise pupils and staff alike. Some lead to qualifications or awards, such as Sports Leader or Duke of Edinburgh; others involve the learning of specific skills, such as formal programming and computer animation, not available in the mainstream curriculum; many involve pupils of different ages working together or older pupils leading younger pupils or even *vice versa*. Provision for children's outdoor activities in the Nursery class and Reception year is enriched by weekly afternoon visits to the beach, known as "Beach School". These well-managed afternoons contribute both to children's social and emotional development and to their knowledge and understanding of the world.

The organisation of the curriculum is excellent in its flexibility and in the success with which it has supported the development of the 'school of one'. Transitions from one year or one phase to the next are smooth and pupils and parents agree that the arrangements for settling in new pupils and for preparing pupils for entry to their next schools are effective. Specialist teachers from the Upper School teach regularly in the Lower School and class teachers from Lower School teach regularly in the Upper school. The rigorous approach to planning and the highly effective use of directors of teaching, one for Lower and one for Upper School, have ensured that such teaching is appropriate to the ages being taught. Flexibility is also evident in the way in which ability is handled. The Cognita group's pattern of teaching phonics to early years and to Key Stage 1 according to stage of development rather than age is implemented to good effect. The use of setting, where appropriate, and the well-planned deployment of learning support assistants contribute vitally to the success of the school's policy of supporting and challenging pupils appropriately.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding. Half the teaching observed was of outstanding quality and a number of other lessons contained outstanding features. This represents further improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are characterised by good relationships between the pupils and their teachers. As a result of the high quality of teaching, pupils of all abilities make very good progress as they move through the school, and this is reflected in the high level of success achieved by pupils in GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11. Many pupils work above the expected standards across the school. Pupils express confidence in their teachers' support. The school's academic leadership makes effective use of its frequent monitoring of the quality of teaching and planning, linked to opportunities for professional development, to improve the quality of teaching. Close links between managers in the Upper and Lower Schools ensure consistency in this process. Overall, the high quality of teaching benefits from the small size of classes and the positive response of pupils to opportunities for learning. Teachers are well qualified

for the subjects they teach. Lessons are well managed and pupils respond well to the learning opportunities provided. Behaviour in lessons is very good.

Lessons are planned and structured effectively. The high quality of lessons in general is supported by teachers' suitably detailed written plans and their clear view of how learning will be developed, identifying, specifically, which of the school's priority elements of learning and personal development will be included. Teachers throughout the school use a good range of teaching strategies to enliven lessons. Teaching makes good use of available resources to support learning, including computers and interactive white boards. The careful planning and structuring of lessons underpins the generally lively pace of learning. For example, in a science lesson on plant biology in Year 7, well-timed aspects of the lesson supported pace, whilst enabling the teacher to address the needs of all abilities. In the same lesson the teacher emphasised the importance of clarity in pupils' written and oral responses to questions, by encouraging them to imagine that they were providing their answer for an alien from another planet. The teacher challenged all pupils to reflect on their previous learning in responding to questions. Questioning is used effectively to challenge pupils and to support and encourage those who are less confident. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve relative to their ages and abilities are high. In a French lesson in Year 5, pupils successfully combined different grammatical elements into whole French sentences about the locations of objects and their relationships to other objects. In English in Year 10, pupils in an upper set made excellent progress in coming to grips with the opening of *The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock* with subtle guidance from the teacher.

Teachers know the pupils well and demonstrate a good understanding of their abilities, prior attainments and aptitudes. The planning and conduct of lessons demonstrate consistently close attention to the differing needs and potential of individuals throughout the school. Pupils in Year 6 said they love the way their teachers challenge them. On the other hand, a minority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 felt that teachers did not always take enough account of the pressures they were under in the run-up to GCSE.

Provision for pupils who are identified by the school as having special educational needs (SEN) is good and some features of the SEN provision reflect excellent practice. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported mainly within the curriculum by learning support assistants (LSAs). This ensures that pupils have consistent access to the curriculum. Occasionally, withdrawal is judiciously used to support the development of social skills and confidence. The high quality of support provided by LSAs is reflected in lesson planning and practical support.

Assessment procedures and the monitoring of pupils' progress are rigorous. School managers understand the value of data and its use in monitoring and guiding pupils to make progress. The school has a clear framework for assessment and well-documented strategies for guiding assessment practice. Teachers know their pupils well and have good opportunities to support pupils individually through one-to-one discussions. Effective systems are in place to provide teachers with the information that they need to plan their work. The school can clearly demonstrate action that has been taken to support pupils as a result of its careful monitoring procedures and to identify why a pupil may not be making progress at its predicted rate. Academic mentoring is provided for pupils in Years 6, 9, 10 and 11 including pupils who are identified as having difficulties with aspects of their work. Pupils confirm that they know how well they are doing in their subjects. They confirm that they find the use of

targets for learning useful, although this system is still at a relatively early stage and some older pupils feel that the support is usually but not always good.

The school works hard to ensure the appropriate use of data. Despite the clear strengths and effective current use of data, the school acknowledges that central records of pupils' progress needs to be further developed, using Cognita provided software to make the monitoring of progress and the identification of slippage easier to identify. Marking, guided by a school policy for marking and assessment, is good overall despite inconsistencies in the quality of written feedback which the school has itself identified. Monitoring of marking by school managers has identified where improvements are required. Teachers confirm that they check that pupils' notes are accurate, particularly in the Upper School, but sometimes there is no evidence of the work having been checked.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and the school is clearly successful in achieving its aim of making pupils feel 'secure and confident within themselves and society'. Personal development has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Throughout the school staff create an ethos of high expectations, encouragement and praise that builds the confidence and self-esteem of pupils and gives them a strong motivation to succeed. Self-confidence is greatly enhanced by the many opportunities provided for pupils to celebrate their work and the achievements of others. From an early age pupils learn how to become reflective about their achievements through activities such as circle time, teachers' oral and written comments on pupils' work, and in activities in subjects such as art, English, geography, history and science.

The pupils develop well their understanding of the importance of identifying right and wrong and of having a strong set of moral and social values based on justice and fairness. This is seen in the creation of a moral code as the basis of behaviour in Year 2 through to the discussion of complex moral issues related to euthanasia and abortion or the racism explicit in *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. These moral values inform pupils' understanding of the importance of civil and criminal law based on these principles.

Pupils also learn well from an early age to take responsibility for their own behaviour, firstly in class and year group and then as they move through the Lower and Upper Schools, where they help and support younger pupils through positions of responsibility such as those of prefect and mentor, or as members of school council or team captain. Splendid examples of this commitment to responsibility are provided by the excellent letters of application pupils write for the coveted positions of head and deputy head girl and boy, and the speeches given to their peers by the applicants, which so often emphasise the importance of service in helping to support and improve the school community.

Pupils are strongly involved in supporting the local and the wider community through many fundraising activities, such as support for the Samaritans' Purse and the

Fareham and Gosport Basics Bank, or volunteering work for the Duke of Edinburgh award, working with local senior citizens to build their confidence in using ICT equipment, and singing at local festivals and for senior citizens at the local church.

Pupils develop a good understanding of public institutions and services. Younger pupils learn about local essential services and representatives such as fire officers come to talk about their roles. A unit of the PSHE course deals with democracy and local government and in Year 9 pupils focus on the arguments for and against a proposed local bypass. The local Member of Parliament has talked about the role and function of members of Parliament in relation to national government as well. Pupils in the Lower and Upper Schools also have the opportunity to take part directly in the democratic process through the Lower and Upper School councils and also in the selection of senior prefects and head and deputy head boy and girl, done by secret ballot after the hustings, where the various candidates have had to present their cases. The latter election was observed during the inspection and the quality of presentations by the candidates was a vivid example of democracy in action.

Pupils' appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultural traditions has improved significantly since the last inspection. In many subjects opportunities to learn about aspects of other cultures abound, including the cultural importance of African facemasks, appreciation of the poetry, books and music of different cultures to a rainforest project. They face up to the clashes between Western tourism and the restraint of more traditional cultures. Visits to a gurdwara, mandir and mosque in Southampton draw pupils' attention to the diversity of religious and cultural traditions in the local area and are closely related to units looking at the beliefs of major world religions. The diversity of cultural and religious traditions in British society is also discussed. Assemblies provide more opportunities to understand and celebrate cultural diversity and pupils have a much better understanding and appreciation than at the time of the last inspection.

Inherent in the fundamental values of the school is a strong belief in democracy, the rule of law, liberty and mutual respect. Older pupils debate difficult moral issues such as IVF, abortion, organ transplants, genetic engineering, pollution, drugs and sex education in a manner which encourages thought and reflection.

The school does not permit the promotion of any political views in lessons, extra-curricular activities or in visits or activities conducted outside the school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The quality of welfare and safeguarding, and of health and safety in the school is excellent. School policies provide clear and helpful guidance and they are implemented effectively.

Pupils feel safe and happy at school. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is excellent. Relationships between staff and pupils are also excellent and pupils readily identify staff they can turn to if they have a problem. Class teachers in the Lower School and tutors in the Senior School are key figures, but a considerable number of older pupils also identified academic mentors and others identified various members of the pastoral team and other staff. Many pupils also identified their peers

and older pupils as people they could turn to with a problem. In their discussions with inspectors about this subject, pupils demonstrated how well the school is achieving its aim of creating a harmonious family atmosphere. In addition, opportunities to raise issues and have a voice in the running of the school through the Lower and Senior School councils, and the support and guidance given to younger pupils through the buddy system, mentoring and the prefects is much appreciated by the younger pupils. Senior pupils also gain considerable satisfaction from taking on these responsibilities and, as they put it, giving something back to the school.

The school has a well thought-out behaviour policy, which emphasises the encouragement of responsible behaviour. It also sets out clear sanctions, which are appropriately applied by staff. Most pupils interviewed said that bullying is a minor issue and incidents of unkindness or bullying are dealt with effectively. Bullying is discussed in PSHE and assemblies, and one junior assembly dealt very well with the issue through the theme of being kind to one another. The school has conducted an in-depth survey of Upper School pupils' experience of bullying and knowledge about the school's anti-bullying policy. The findings revealed a range of mostly low-level unpleasantness. It has used these findings to focus on particular Year groups in which a higher proportion of pupils reported such incidents, and to increase pupils' knowledge of the school's policy and awareness of developing issues, notably cyber-bullying. The survey and the response of the school reflect the school's determined approach and its concern to seek and respond to pupils' views.

The school has clear and fully appropriate safeguarding policies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. These are fully implemented. The designated safeguarding person has had the appropriate level of child protection training, as have several other staff in various parts of the school. All other staff have up-to-date child protection training. Training in child protection and safeguarding is included as part of the induction procedures for all new staff.

The school has a rigorous procedure for detailed risk assessments of relevant activities in the school and also for out-of-school activities and visits, which are carefully monitored by senior staff. Pupils are closely supervised in and around the school and behave in a very sensible and orderly manner. Close attention is paid to safety in all its aspects. Electrical and other equipment is tested regularly; staff are encouraged to report any safety issues, which are dealt with efficiently; and the site manager regularly inspects site. Fire safety is managed effectively, with fire safety equipment placed strategically around the school. The fire alarm is tested regularly and all the buildings are on one system, which is linked to the local fire service. Fire drills are conducted once a term, according to clear and effective procedures. The time taken to evacuate the buildings is suitably short. The close tracking of the presence of visitors, volunteers and staff ensures that the school can easily and swiftly ascertain that everybody is present after an evacuation. CCTV is used well to monitor the school site and guard against intruders. The school's health and safety committee monitors health and safety closely. The school has a suitable written First Aid policy, which is effectively implemented.

Pupils are encouraged strongly to adopt healthy lifestyles. The importance of healthy eating and regular exercise is discussed in circle time, PSHE, assemblies, PE and science. Pupils are encouraged to take part in a wide range of sports activities, in addition to PE and games, which they clearly enjoy. Cooked food is nutritious and takes greater account of healthy eating than it did at the time the last inspection. Healthy breakfast and after-school snacks are provided for those pupils arriving early or leaving late.

Admissions and attendance registers are kept in good order and any unexplained absence is followed up promptly. Attendance registers and other electronic data are backed up off site daily.

The school fulfils all of its responsibilities in relation to the equalities legislation.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

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

The school's arrangements for recruitment checks are meticulously careful and pay due regard to the DfE guidance on safer recruitment. All staff and volunteers are subject to advanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks before they can start work at the school. Clear records are kept, including a correctly maintained single central record, supported by detailed covering checklist for staff files. All interviews of candidates are conducted by a panel with at least one member that has a qualification in safer recruitment, of whom there are four on the staff.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation have been further improved since the last inspection. They reflect continuous care and a thoughtful approach to ensuring that learning spaces are effectively planned and that they are safe. Refurbishments made to the exterior and interior of the buildings have been successful in providing a strong single identity to the school. The interiors of all buildings have been refurnished with bright fresh light wooden furniture. Storage has been effectively designed in each classroom and notable care has been taken to provide furniture of the right size relative to the ages of pupils. Sufficient outdoor space meets the needs of pupils of all ages.

A good range of specialist rooms is available. Three laboratories provide excellent accommodation for the sciences and ICT rooms are located in all parts of the school, including in the infant department and in the learning support facilities. Sports facilities, which are very well used, include an all weather surface, grass games pitch and gym, are supplemented by visits to local sports centres to extend the range of sports facilities available to pupils. Sufficient space is provided for creative activities including music and art. The school hall is well used for music, assemblies and for drama. Its additional use for providing high quality food for the children and various times of the day is effectively organised. The large art room, which provides a base for art, graphic design and textiles, is in the process of being converted to provide two work spaces. The current temporary use of the home economics room for art lessons is not an appropriate shared use. Recent developments of classrooms take care to ensure appropriate sound insulation. Maintenance and cleaning is of a high standard throughout, including cleaning the accommodation of the school's range of animals, who receive a high degree of care and attention from the pupils themselves.

Toilet and washing facilities are sufficient and showers are provided in the well-maintained changing facilities for boys and girls. Water in the taps for washing is maintained at an appropriate temperature and drinking water is available throughout the school. The medical room meets requirements in all respects and includes an adjustable height bed which makes the facility very suitable for the treatment of complex medical needs should this be necessary. There is good access throughout the school and equality legislation is met in all respects. The school's documentation relating to equality of access outlines provision for disabled pupils should they attend the school and an adjustable height desk is thoughtfully provided in one science laboratory.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 6 - The quality of information for parents

Parents are provided with ample information about the school through the school website, through leaflets and through regular and informative news bulletins. All the required information is posted on the school's website, although some, such as details of curriculum content still refer to the previous term. Parents receive regular written reports of high quality on their children twice a year and can attend a parents' evening once a year. Parents report that the school is very approachable and that they receive a prompt response to any questions or concerns.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

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

The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure, which fully complies with requirements.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

SECTION C: ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT, AND MAINTENANCE OF THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

This section is not a requirement of the Education Act 2002.

The quality of the organisation and management of the school

The school is very well organised and managed. It has been successfully led through a rapid process of review and change. Even though the process is not complete, judicious changes in management roles, particularly in relation to the leadership of teaching, have established a unity of purpose throughout the school, centred on the improvement of teaching and learning. The Headmistress leads a united and reflective staff, who share a common sense of purpose, driven forward by ambitious aims for improvement. The Headmistress shares with management and staff her highly ambitious aims for standards and for the future development of the school. The school's organisation is supported by highly efficient administration.

PART D: 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 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the careful support given to the children by 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 or disabilities are sensitively supported and cared for. The children enjoy coming to school and feel safe and happy. The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS are fully met. The leadership provided by the school's senior management has encouraged the Head of Nursery to develop her work rigorously across a wide range of areas, including the Beach School, managing the well-qualified staff, professional development, parental liaison, classroom practices and resourcing. Supported by the senior management and closely liaising with the Reception class teacher, this secures continuous improvement to promote the children's life chances across the EYFS.

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. Most children reach expected levels of development and many exceed them. In the Nursery, children develop particularly good social skills and their listening and speaking skills are very well promoted. The children begin to acquire early literacy skills, reading and writing their names, beginning to read some words and, later, recognising these in books. Physical development is also extremely well supported both indoors and outside as well as during the regular visits to the Beach School. This significantly extends the children's experiences by encouraging their self confidence and self-esteem, as well as enabling them to apply their school-based learning to a new situation through observation, exploration and experimentation. It also promotes good behaviour and an interest in the environment and promotes effective learning skills to support the children's transition to the next stage of their learning. The move into the Reception class is supported by the good working relationship between the Head of Nursery and the Reception class teacher, whereby the Reception children visit the Nursery, using the indoor and outdoor facilities as well as going to the Beach School fortnightly. Such activities serve to balance the more structured learning of mathematics and literacy which are well promoted in the Reception class. The children work hard to develop their phonic skills and the high quality of early number work in the Nursery is extended effectively in the Reception class. Throughout the EYFS, the staff have high expectations of the children. The children are well motivated and engage in their learning with enthusiasm, responding well to the challenges presented to them. These challenges are extended with specialist teaching of French and drama as well as 'mini-movers' ballet. Festivals and a variety of faiths are celebrated and the Nursery children have enjoyed the Chinese New Year as well as encountering other cultures and beliefs in topics such as one on Morocco. The staff work closely with parents, keeping them informed about their learning. The Nursery parent

representative plays an active part in developing social contacts and in promoting parents' awareness of the Nursery's work, including the Beach School. The key person system is also effective in establishing and maintaining these relationships and in sharing knowledge about the children's development, achievements and progress.

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

The staff ensure that the children are well cared for and form appropriate emotional attachments which are central to the supportive and safe environment in the Nursery and Reception classes. The children are happy. They learn to behave well and cooperate well with one another, respecting each others' feelings. Their imagination is well fostered, and the Beach School extends this into a new situation, enabling them to apply their social skills effectively as well as developing independence within a well-managed situation. Physical exercise is very well promoted and healthy eating forms a significant part of their learning. 'Mini master chef' sessions along with snack and breakfast times are extremely well used by staff to promote discussions on healthy eating. The school lunches are also greatly enjoyed. Children develop their awareness of hygiene and other personal needs. The transition from the Nursery into the Reception class is well organised and the links continue with termly activity days when the whole of the EYFS works together. The carefully organised Reception programme also ensures that the transition into Year 1 is smooth. This supports the introduction of elements of the National Curriculum as many children meet the requirements of the EYFS during the Reception year. The Reception class regularly uses the computer suite shared with Key Stage 1 and Nursery children also have access to this.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years provision

The leadership and management of the Nursery are outstanding. The Reception year is also very well managed. There is no overall leader of the EYFS covering the Nursery and Reception classes, however the close working relationship between the Head of Nursery and the Reception class teacher ensures that the children's learning and development is sustained across the EYFS. The use of specialist staff across the EYFS is well managed. The recent remodelling of the Nursery rooms to provide a more flexible and open environment has been greatly appreciated by the children and staff, and parents commented on the improved environment. Plans to refurbish the outdoor area and the toilet provision are in hand. Careful oversight by the school's senior management has encouraged the Head of Nursery and the very well-qualified staff to develop their approach to the EYFS both in their outstanding educational practices and in improvement planning. Self evaluation is particularly good overall. In the Nursery it is excellent. Priorities are set effectively and are used to identify challenging targets. The Head of Nursery has established staff supervision discussions and appraisals. Overall, performance management is very effective and supports well managed staff professional development. The safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met. Risk assessments are carefully considered. At the Beach School, staff take scrupulous care over safety, while encouraging the children to identify potential issues, including awareness of what to do if there are dogs about, as well as unusual hazards such as the presence of a parked mechanical digger in the car park by the beach. This encourages the children to relate cause and effect and to become more safely independent whilst still being carefully supervised. Links with parents are outstanding and contacts with

outside agencies are in place so that children are able to receive support when needed.

Does the school meet the statutory 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 ISC and its constituent associations. Further copies of the report are available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk