

Ghyll Royd School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

The inspection of registered provision was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

Ghyll Royd School and Nursery is a small non-selective preparatory school for boys and girls aged from three months to 11 years. It was established in 1889 and moved in 2000 into its current premises, a renovated country house with extensive grounds on the outskirts of Ilkley. Originally the school admitted only boys but since January 2010 it has been co-educational. There are 72 full-time pupils in the main school, only seven of whom are girls. Since the previous inspection in 2008, the Early Years Foundation Stage provision has been extended by the opening of 'Babes in the Wood' which is registered to care for children aged from three months to two years. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision includes a pre-school class and a Reception class. There are currently 76 children within the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are 12 full-time and 18 part-time children aged three years and above, of whom 27 are in receipt of government funding. There are two full-time and 44 part-time children aged below three years. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

The school aims to: 'create a happy and supportive learning environment, giving boys and girls a feeling of confidence and self-worth enabling each to reach their full potential... by providing a strong focus on the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics'.

Evaluation of the school

Ghyll Royd School and Nursery successfully meets its aims. It provides a good quality of education for its pupils and, because of the many strengths in the outstanding curriculum, pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at the school. Pupils make good progress and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The provision made for their welfare, health and safety is satisfactory overall and

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/ukpga_20060021_en_4#pt3-ch2-pb4-l1g49

arrangements to safeguard pupils are satisfactory. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained the outstanding features of the curriculum and of the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There have been improvements to the provision within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school meets almost all of the regulations.

Quality of education

The overall quality of education is good. The broad and balanced curriculum is outstanding and includes all of the subjects of the National Curriculum. The focus on teaching the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics ensures that pupils make good progress in these subjects and develop outstanding basic skills as they move through the school. Curriculum policies are in place and good use is made of published commercial schemes. Work is often planned around cross-curricular topics which interest pupils and make their learning fun. In the classes for older pupils, where there only boys, topics and books used as a focus for writing activities have been selected to interest boys, for example, adventure and fantasy stories. Elsewhere, topics are selected to appeal to boys and girls. In the pre-school and Reception classes, children learn through play and there is a good balance between activities which children can choose for themselves and those which are directed by adults. The curriculum is enhanced exceptionally well by an impressive range of extra-curricular opportunities and interesting visits out of school. French is taught to pupils from Reception upwards. There is an emphasis for the oldest pupils on developing reasoning and problem solving skills to assist them in their preparation for examinations for entry to secondary schools.

Music is a particular strength of the curriculum and all pupils, including those in the pre-school and Reception classes, benefit from instruction from a specialist music teacher. From an early age, pupils are taught to play musical instruments and are introduced to musical notation. All pupils are taught to play the recorder in Year 2. Many pupils go on to learn to play other musical instruments including the guitar, piano and drums, for an additional fee. Sport is a significant feature of the school with specialist sports coaching for children from pre-school onwards. The older pupils talk with pride about their successes in sports tournaments and friendly fixtures. The very wide range of clubs includes lunchtime Lego and Scrabble clubs and a very well attended Spanish club.

Teaching and assessment are good. Classes are small; this is a key feature of the school's success because class teachers are able to give each pupil much individual attention. Teachers know pupils well; good relationships and clear expectations ensure that pupils are mostly well motivated and keen to learn. Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear explanations and use interactive whiteboards well to ensure that pupils understand their tasks. Although the planning of lessons ensures that pupils make good progress overall, the quality of lesson planning varies. Where lessons are particularly successful, planning clearly identifies what pupils are

expected to learn and how tasks are to be modified for individuals or groups. Marking in mathematics and writing always corrects errors, particularly in spelling and grammar. Some marking is particularly helpful and identifies for pupils the ways to make the next piece of work better or indicates the specific skills which need to be improved. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school. Overall, pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well by the time they leave the school. They make particularly good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is good and pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. They are polite, helpful and friendly and cooperate well with one another and the positive relationships between staff and pupils create a harmonious school community. New pupils say that they have been made to feel very welcome and they settle quickly into the school's friendly community. The school recognises the importance of spiritual development through developing pupils' interest and pleasure in the world around them. For example, pre-school children looked on in awe as they saw rainbows appear in the bubbles that they were playing with. Similarly, pupils in the main school are respectful and listen carefully as older pupils take turns saying a grace at lunchtime. Pupils say that they enjoy school and this is reflected in their good levels of attendance. Their academic skills and their positive attitudes to learning mean that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The topics that pupils study, such as a local study of Ilkley, along with visits to museums, art galleries and stately homes, ensure that pupils have a broad understanding of English public institutions. Their understanding of democracy was helped by a recent visit from the local Member of Parliament. Pupils enjoy opportunities to take on responsibilities. For example, older pupils show care for younger children, particularly when acting as lunchtime table monitors. The school teaches pupils to appreciate diversity by recognising the many varied cultures and traditions present in Britain today and, as a consequence, pupils develop a tolerance, understanding and respect for others. Pupils are clear that they all get on well, say that they feel safe and that bullying is rare.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

There are some good features in the provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety but this is satisfactory overall because some aspects of practices to safeguard pupils are only satisfactory. Staff are caring and work hard to ensure that pupils feel safe. There are policies and procedures in place to minimise risks throughout the school and to provide a good standard of care for the pupils. Suitable risk assessments have been drawn up and appropriate plans have been implemented to manage any identified risks, for example, in the car park and by the pond. There is a suitable fire safety policy and risk assessment in place and regular fire drills are held and documented. If pupils are sick or ill, appropriate care is provided for them near the

school office, by staff with first aid qualifications. In discussion with pupils, and from their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, it is clear that they feel safe and well cared for and they are able to identify many adults to whom they would talk if they had a problem. The supervision of pupils is good while on school premises and when using outdoor play areas, including those in the pre-school play area, and pupils know that rules and routines are in place to help to keep them safe.

Child protection procedures are satisfactory and all necessary checks on the suitability of staff are carried out. There has been some staff training on child protection and there are firm plans in place to ensure that newly recruited staff or any staff who missed earlier training also receive suitable training. The designated teacher for child protection has received her initial training and has a confirmed place to attend refresher training.

Pupils develop a very good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. The school encourages healthy eating by providing all pupils with freshly cooked meals. Pupils are encouraged to eat fruit and vegetables and to drink water regularly. They understand the importance of regular exercise and value the opportunities provided for them to use the facilities that are available at the school including the field and the sports hall. The school fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school carries out the necessary safeguarding checks for staff and has completed a single central register of staff identity, qualifications and checks as required.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises provide a very good quality of accommodation for pupils of all ages. The location of the Babes in the Wood Nursery and the pre-school class ensures that the youngest children have access to good quality outdoor play facilities. The school is bright and the classrooms, communal areas and outside areas are well maintained and in a good state of repair. There are specialist teaching rooms for science, information and communication technology and music. The sports hall provides particularly good accommodation for a wide range of physical education activities. There are ample washroom facilities to meet the needs of the boys and girls currently on the school roll. However, there is not currently a suitable room for pupils if they become unwell.

Provision of information

A good range of information is provided to parents through the school's prospectus and its very informative website. The well-designed website has recently been updated to ensure that parents have access to all of the required policies and procedures. There are regular newsletters including those which are specifically for the Babes in the Wood Nursery and the pre-school class. Curriculum planning is shared with parents each half term. However, information about the number of complaints received under the formal part of the school's complaints procedure is not made available to parents and prospective parents. There are two detailed written reports each year and regular meetings for parents. A small number of parents indicate that they would like more information about their children's progress, particularly if their children are not on track to be successful in the entrance examinations for secondary schools.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a written complaints procedure that meets almost all of the regulations. However, the agreed procedures are not always followed fully when a panel hearing needs to be set up to consider a complaint.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter with skills that are generally typical for their age. They make good progress over the entire Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, at the end of the Reception year, they meet, or in many cases greatly exceed, the early learning goals for their age, so that outcomes are good. Children make particularly strong improvements in their personal, social and emotional development along with their speaking and listening skills. Provision is good for children aged under three, within the Babes in the Wood Nursery and in the pre-school class as is that for those aged three and over.

Children are happy and enjoy their time in all areas within the setting. The good adult-to-child ratios along with the skills of the staff ensure that children feel safe, are well cared for and make good progress. The environment is good overall and in 'Babes in the Wood' and the pre-school class there is regular access to the outdoor learning environment. Children in the pre-school class delight in running around and using the good range of outdoor equipment. However, opportunities are limited for Reception children to extend their learning outdoors.

The way that children are helped to transfer from one phase of the setting to the next is a developing strength, because there are staff who work in both the Babes in the Wood Nursery and in the pre-school class. Children settle well because the staff make them feel welcome and because of the interesting activities that are available to them. They quickly become confident and their independence is promoted well;

they get to know the routines, which make them feel secure. Staff act as good role models and children benefit from lots of praise and encouragement. Detailed tracking for each child, from entry, ensures that progress is well recorded and allows next steps to be planned. Discussions encourage children to understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise and all are praised when they eat their healthy snacks and lunches. They are taught the importance of good personal hygiene, for example, all are encouraged to wash their hands before meals. Children's learning is brought to life by visits out, such as to the shops, and by visitors, such as a nurse telling them about some of her work.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Provision has been developed well and staff ensure that children's day-to-day needs are effectively met. Children are well cared for and daily risk assessments are recorded to ensure that the spaces and equipment are as safe as they need to be. Staff have had the appropriate training, including training in child protection. Although children have received appropriate care following any minor accidents or mishaps, systems have not always been robust enough to record all of the information in a systematic way or to the required level of detail.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.⁵

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with regulation 5 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- make available to parents and other interested parties details of the number of complaints registered and the formal complaints procedure during the previous school year (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the manner in which complaints are to be handled (standards in part 7) and must:

- ensure that the complaints policy is implemented effectively with regard to the establishment and operation of a panel hearing (paragraph 25(f)).

⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made

The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve the quality and consistency of lesson planning across the school
- extend the good practice in teaching related to the sharing of lesson objectives, the marking of pupils' work and the setting of targets to help pupils to improve their work
- improve the opportunities for Reception pupils for learning outside
- improve the rigour and the quality of the systems for recording accidents and the subsequent actions taken in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Primary School		
Date school opened	September 1889		
Age range of pupils	3 months - 11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 66	Girls: 7	Total: 76
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 43	Girls: 23	Total: 66
Number of children aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 13	Girls: 8	Total: 21
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,863		
Annual fees (childcare)	£6,627 (term time) to £12,000 (50 weeks)		
Address of school	Greystone Manor Ikley Road Burley-in-Wharfedale Ikley West Yorkshire LS29 7HW		
Telephone number	01943 865575		
Email address	information@ghyllroydschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Irene Connor		
Proprietor	Mrs Sheila York		