

# Grey House Preparatory School

## Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	850/6029
Unique Reference Number	116546
Inspection number	330432
Inspection dates	10 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

## **Information about the school**

The Grey House School is a non-selective, preparatory day school for pupils aged 4 – 11. It was founded in 1949. The present proprietors are a partnership of the original founder's grandchildren and their father. There are 138 pupils on roll. Nine children are funded under the Nursery Scheme. The school is set in attractive grounds in the village of Hartley Wintney, Hampshire. The school has identified 12 pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). The school was last inspected in March 2006.

## **Evaluation of the school**

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Parents, quite rightly, are very happy with what the school provides for their children. The provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Pupils' personal development and their achievements in English and mathematics by the time they leave school are also outstanding. The school meets all the requirements of the regulations but should improve the rigour of some procedures relating to welfare, health and safety in order to achieve best practice. Since the last inspection some improvements have been made to curriculum planning such as improving links between subjects and ensuring that pupils know what they are learning. However, continuous assessment still lacks consistency across the school in the way it is used to inform planning and to provide clear learning targets for pupils. Pupils are successful in their exams to gain places at the secondary schools of their choice.

## **Quality of education**

The school has a good curriculum. It has all the areas of the National Curriculum, as well as French, Latin and Spanish. It is successfully enriched with a wide range of activities after school, visits to places of interest and residential visits abroad. Good emphasis is given to developing skills of literacy and numeracy and pupils achieve high levels in these areas. Creativity too has a high profile within the curriculum. Pupils have good experiences in music, art and drama and physical education (PE). They achieve high standards and enjoy these activities. This means that the curriculum overall, for the youngest to the oldest pupils, provides good breadth, variety and interest.

Pupils make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation stage where the curriculum gives them a good balance between teacher- and self-directed activities and provides for indoor and outdoor learning. Acting like palaeontologists while learning about dinosaurs gave added interest to learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils continue to make good progress overall and achieve excellent standards in writing, reading, speaking, listening and mathematics. Progress is uneven between different year groups and subjects. In Key Stages 1 and 2 in history, geography and science, despite their understanding of what is being taught, pupils do not use their good writing skills sufficiently well to express their own views and ideas. Too much of their work comprises copying notes. This limits their achievements. Pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good and sometimes outstanding progress. Pupils' use of information and communication technology is satisfactory.

Teaching is good. There is also some outstanding teaching. Arrangements for assessment are satisfactory. Teachers are well prepared and confident. Pupils and teachers have excellent relationships and behaviour in lessons is exemplary. This means that the classroom atmosphere is very supportive of learning, since lessons run without any unnecessary interruption. The low class numbers mean that pupils receive good individual support which helps them to make the most of the tasks they are given. The most effective lessons have very clear expectations of pupils. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on persuasive writing the key elements to be included in the task were clearly explained to pupils who could then self assess whether they had met the criteria for a successful piece of writing. The best lessons also have an element of fun. Some teachers make good use of pupils' working and discussing in pairs. This allows pupils to talk things through and develop ideas.

Not all lessons are providing a wide-enough range of tasks and approaches to meet the needs of different abilities. There are, however, some good examples of teachers providing different approaches and resources within lessons, which give an element of choice for pupils to either gain additional help or to respond to the task in a more individual way. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and in the best examples it is clear what needs to be done to improve further. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' achievements are measured by reference to national expectations but the school has not yet developed a coherent way of recording and using assessment to check progress year on year, and more immediately to develop shorter term learning targets.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their excellent personal development begins in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils enjoy school very much as they remarked, 'I have a great time. The teachers are enthusiastic and I have lots of good friends who are always there for me.' They are very happy and keen learners. This is manifest in their good attendance and outstanding behaviour. The school meets its aim to provide 'a happy, caring environment'. The personal, social and health education programme together with

religious education provides very valuable experiences for pupils to develop social skills and an understanding of life skills of value beyond school. Pupils have a clear grasp of what is right and wrong and they display a considerable degree of maturity in their attitudes to learning. Pupils of all abilities are very confident and are keen to talk about their work to visitors. Their awareness and recognition of their own and others' religious heritage and traditions is successfully promoted through learning about other faiths and cultures and celebrating festivals such as Christmas, Diwali and Chinese New Year.

The school makes a very good contribution to developing pupils' awareness of the local community and their place in it. They raise funds for a large number of charities. Visitors are invited to meet and speak to pupils. Pupils' knowledge of British institutions is excellent. Older pupils recently visited Westminster Abbey to attend the Commonwealth Service. In their morning assembly, they talked confidently about what they had seen. Pupils contribute to the school community by taking on various tasks and duties. For example, prefects keep a check on adherence to school rules and Year 6 read with younger pupils. The Year 6 pupils also made puppets and a theatre and performed their own play scripts. The school takes part in, and has won, a national swimming competition. Some pupils expressed the view that they would like to have their views listened to more.

Pupils' high standards in literacy and numeracy and the opportunities to take responsibility, for example, running their own stalls at the Christmas fair, prepare them successfully for the next stage of their education and for their future economic well-being.

### **Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety**

Provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school has adequate procedures to ensure that appropriate checks are made on staff prior to appointment and suitable risk assessments are completed for fire, general health and safety, and outside visits. Staff have attended the required training for first aid, child protection and fire safety. The school has not been rigorous enough in ensuring that risk assessments are completed to a consistently high level and that information is up to date on the single central register. Supervision of pupils is satisfactory and pupils' excellent behaviour contributes effectively to overall safety on landings and stairs.

Pupils are not concerned about bullying and are confident that such issues are dealt with effectively by the headteacher and staff. Provision for physical health is excellent. There are regular PE lessons, swimming and other sporting clubs, including running, which are well attended. Healthy options are available with school meals and pupils are aware of the need to eat healthily. The school has a new sports hall which has the potential to significantly increase opportunities for PE. There is a current plan that meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children make outstanding progress in all areas of learning because the leadership and management are excellent. Children enter the school with expected levels of expertise in literacy and numeracy but attain standards that are well above average by the end of their reception year. Children use their knowledge of letter sounds extremely well when they read and write because of a structured approach to teaching. Children's health, welfare and safety are good because they are given a high priority and as a result children feel secure, are confident learners and enjoy their first experiences of school life. Practical activities are organised well, resources are used effectively and children learn to become independent. Staff expertise helps children to appreciate music and develop good listening skills. A very strong partnership with parents allows children to settle quickly. Children are assessed carefully and an overview of their attainment on entry and their subsequent achievement is recorded. Children's progress is tracked meticulously. However, marking only highlights what children can do and does not always record what they need to improve.

Children's personal development is outstanding and their behaviour is excellent. Children are well involved in the local community. They sing to the elderly and raise money, for example, for guide dogs for the blind and Samaritans' Purse. Staff are trained in first aid for children in their early years. Risk assessments are completed carefully whenever children go on visits, for example, to Windsor Castle. Visitors including police officers, fire fighters, storytellers, drummers and church members enrich the curriculum effectively. Healthy lifestyles are promoted extremely well through play in the outdoor area and the nutritious meals freshly cooked for them in the school kitchen.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- Develop the use of continuous assessment to identify year on year progress and specific learning targets
- Improve the rigour of checking policies and procedures to ensure that high standards are maintained in all areas of welfare, health and safety.

## Inspection Judgement Recording Form

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

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	✓			
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?	✓			
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	✓			
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	✓			
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?	✓			

## School details

Name of school	Grey House Preparatory School
DCSF number	8506029
Unique reference number	116546
Type of school	Preparatory
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1949
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 95      Girls: 43      Total: 138
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 7896
Address of school	Mount Pleasant Hartley Wintney Hook Hampshire RG27 8PW
Telephone number	01252 842353
Fax number	01252 845527
Email address	schooloffice@grey-house.co.uk
Headteacher	Mrs C Allen
Proprietor	OR, JG & JP McMonigall
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI
Dates of inspection	10 March 2009