

Woodhill Preparatory School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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}

Information about the school

Woodhill Preparatory School is an independent day school situated on two sites at Chandlers Ford and Botley, in Hampshire. Both establishments provide for girls and boys aged from three to 11 years. There are currently 136 pupils on roll, including 46 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are 42 children who receive nursery funding and 24 attend part time.

Woodhill is a non-selective school and admits pupils with a wide range of abilities. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school provides a before-school and an after-school care club for pupils at both sites and pupils can stay on at school until 6.00pm. every day. This provision has been inspected as part of this inspection.

The school opened in 1969 and was last inspected in November 2009. An emergency visit to scrutinise the school's safeguarding and complaints procedures was made in September 2012.

The school's mission is to provide 'a happy atmosphere in which pupils can thrive and feel successful; achieve academic success and receive a wide range of academic experiences and opportunities within the wider curriculum'.

Evaluation of the school

Woodhill Preparatory School provides a good quality of education, is successful in meeting its aims and has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. At both school sites, the good teaching combined with good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that pupils make good progress overall. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good. Curriculum policies and guidance for teachers are not very helpful, but this does not stop pupils experiencing a satisfactory curriculum. The exception is the Early Years Foundation Stage where the curriculum is clear and very well planned. The school has worked hard in recent months to secure improvement in the provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding, and this provision is now satisfactory.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Quality of education

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and covers the required areas of learning. It is underpinned by good opportunities for pupils' personal, social and health education. The focus on English, including speaking skills, numeracy and reasoning skills prepares pupils well for their future schools.

Conversational French is taught to all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and this makes a good contribution to their cultural development. Specialist teachers teach physical education at both sites. At the Chandlers Ford site, one of the teachers teaches mathematics to all pupils in Years 3 to 6.

The school has an overarching curriculum policy and there are policies for most subjects taught. However, they are not useful as guides to teaching and assessment. Many of the policies do not state, in general terms, how the subject is to be taught and how work will be planned to meet the needs of pupils, particularly pupils who have a disability, have other special educational needs or are gifted and talented. The policy statements do not set out the general principles of assessment, recording and reporting of progress for the subject, and these matters are not covered in a separate overall policy document. The policies are in the process of being reviewed by the recently appointed headteacher.

An evaluation of teachers' planning and timetables at both sites shows that there is a satisfactory range of enrichment activities such as trips, visits and extra-curricular activities.

At both sites, the quality of teachers' written curriculum planning varies and this reflects differences in the quality of subject guidance provided. As a result, some of the lesson planning appears to lack a clear focus on the skills to be taught to pupils of different abilities, and it is not clear in the written documents how the more able pupils are to be challenged. This is in contrast to the written curriculum provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Here, the planning of activities for both teacher-led activities and for children to follow their own interests is very clear matched well to children's stage of development.

Nevertheless, despite the weaknesses in written plans, teaching and assessment are good for all pupils. The small class sizes and good relationships mean that individual attention is provided pupils in all lessons. The teachers are experienced, understand quickly when pupils are having difficulty learning, and step in appropriately. The pupils are confident that teachers will help them, but are also highly motivated to challenge themselves by seeking solutions first.

The best teaching prepares the pupils really well at the start of the lesson to work on their own, allowing the teacher more time to work with those who needed more help either to go back over previous learning or to take their learning forward. In these lessons, the high quality questions encourage pupils to think. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Years 4 and 5 pupils, the discussions between the teacher and pupils helped those who were less certain about solving ratios learn from those

pupils who had mastered the skill. However, there are not always such positive elements. In the few instances where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, it is because teachers do not check through good quality discussion, what pupils understand. Pupils are not then well enough prepared to work on their own. Individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs focus on curriculum areas where pupils require additional support. These are regularly reviewed by teachers with parents. An additional lesson, called independent study time, is built into the weekly timetable for pupils to complete corrections. This helps pupils make good progress.

The school has continued to develop its assessment arrangements since the last inspection. Teachers set targets for pupils to improve their work, and their marking refers to these. Pupils, of all ages, are very clear about how well they are doing and what they need to improve on. There is now a regular review of pupils' progress at both sites, carried out by teachers with the headteachers. However, there is still scope for teachers to refine their use of this information in their planning to ensure that pupils are provided with work that challenges them to make even better progress.

The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has developed and implemented a very effective system for keeping track of children's learning. The experiences provided for children are well matched to their needs and, consequently, they make good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, including the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils say they enjoy being at school and this is exemplified by their very good attendance. They enjoy the variety of tasks and duties they have to help others, including helping at the care club, mealtimes and playtimes. They make friends easily and say how they feel well supported by each other and their teachers. Pupils behave well. They were unanimous that they are kept safe in school and that they would be able to take matters that were worrying them, such as being bullied, to a friend or another adult. However, older pupils were less sure of how to react to bullying that may come via mobiles and computers.

Pupils acquire a good understanding of other faiths and beliefs because they not only visit places of worship but learn from each other. They show great respect for each other's differences and have a positive view about how everyone can contribute. This is evident in the musical and theatrical productions they take part in and the spontaneous clapping that rewards personal achievements. Pupils are keen to support charities and play their part in making suggestions as to how the school can improve. They have an extremely positive attitude towards learning and participate enthusiastically in all the activities and cultural experiences that are provided them.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for pupils' and children's welfare, health and safety throughout the school is satisfactory. All staff are recently trained in child protection and robust systems are now in place for ensuring this training is kept up to date. There are appropriately trained staff to take the lead on child protection and welfare matters at both school sites and also for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Appropriate safer recruitment procedures are in place, as are the policies for child protection. There is a good proportion of the staff trained to deal with the health and welfare needs of the youngest children. First-aid procedures are clear. Accidents are followed up quickly and fire risk assessments are resolved in a timely manner. The policies for behaviour and anti-bullying are in place but do not clarify how and when implementation is to be monitored and reviewed. Staff adhere to the policies and pupils say that they are free from harassment and are well cared for. However, older pupils were less sure of how to react to bullying that may come via mobiles and computers.

The morning and after-school care clubs are well supervised. Parents arrange for their children to attend on a regular and impromptu basis and attendance is carefully registered. Supervisors ensure there is a broad range of recreational activities available, appropriate for their age.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All the required safeguarding checks on staff are made, including Criminal Records Bureau checks. All are recorded appropriately in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises at both the Chandlers Ford and Botley provide a suitable environment that is safe and secure and enables pupils to learn and achieve. Improvements to the premises and accommodation have been made since the last inspection. Hot water is now available in the pupils' washrooms. Both sites now have a suitable room for pupils who are taken ill whilst at school. The school buildings are maintained to a satisfactory standard. Food preparation areas used by the school's care club have received high ratings from the recent Food Standards Agency inspections.

The accommodation for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is inviting, and well equipped to meet all their needs. Adaptations have been made since the last inspection to improve outdoor play spaces at Chandlers Ford, but the covered area is too small.

Provision of information

All the required information is provided or else available on request. The annual pupil progress report provides a well-balanced commentary on the year's activities and how well an individual child has achieved.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

There is a robust system for responding to parental concerns or complaints at an early stage and all parties concerned are kept well informed. There has been one formal complaint in the last year.

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.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- set out a curriculum policy which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for all subjects taught at the school and ensure these are implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Ensure that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to discuss what they are learning so they understand what they have to do and can work with greater independence.
- In order to make even better progress, ensure that teachers consistently use information and knowledge of pupils' prior achievements to tailor activities that more closely match pupils' needs and abilities.
- Ensure that the policies for behaviour and anti-bullying are regularly reviewed.
- Improve pupils' understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet and mobile phones.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made.

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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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Independent preparatory day school		
Date school opened	1969		
Age range of pupils	3 to 11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 55	Girls: 57	Total: 112
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 10	Girls: 14	Total: 24
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,262		
Address of school	61 Brownhill Road Chandler's Ford Eastleigh Hampshire SO53 2 EH	Brook Lane Botley Hampshire SO30 2 ER	
Telephone number	02380 268012		
Email address	office-cf@wodhill.hants.sch.uk office-b@woodhill.hants.sch.uk		
Joint headteachers	Mr Hamish McKeown and Mr Mike Dacombe		
Proprietor	Mrs Marjorie Dacombe		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 December 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodhill Preparatory School, Eastleigh SO53 2EH and Botley SO30 2ER

When inspectors recently visited your schools before Christmas, we really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about your work and life at school. Thank you for your friendly welcome and for being so polite and helpful. We judged Woodhill School to be a good school. This is because you:

- enjoy your school and work hard in all your lessons
- learn many things because of your good teachers
- show good behaviour and get on with each other extremely well
- have good attendance
- feel safe and are well looked after.

We talked to the headteachers and about their plans to make sure they continue to meet all the government's requirements for independent schools. We talked about ways to make sure all the teaching is good. In particular, we have asked the headteachers to make sure that teachers' lesson planning clearly sets out the skills the teachers expect to you learn in lessons and make sure these are well matched to your needs. We have also suggested that you are given more opportunity to discuss things in class.

I hope that you all continue to enjoy your learning at Woodhill School in the future

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk
Her Majesty's Inspector