

# Yorston Lodge School

18 St John's Road, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 0DP

**Inspection dates** 14–16 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Pupils' achievement	Outstanding	1
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Quality of curriculum	Outstanding	1
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### This school is outstanding because

- The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils well and this ensures that pupils make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points.
- Pupils' behaviour within school is exemplary. Pupils are exceptionally courteous, polite and supportive of each other.
- The curriculum has some significant strengths, particularly in the emphasis on pupils reading on a daily basis and the extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
- Many parents and carers are very positive about many aspects of the school. All would recommend the school to others.
- The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher knows precisely what to do to further improve the school.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a half-day notice period.
- Inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by 11 different teachers, looked at pupils' workbooks, and listened to them read. Discussions were held with pupils and staff. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, at play, and around the school.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, and records of attainment.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed by 60 parents and carers on Parent View and 20 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Kathryn Gethin, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Amraz Ali

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Yorston Lodge School was established in 1904 in Knutsford, Cheshire. It is a co-educational day school. The school aims to be 'the happiest school in Cheshire' where pupils 'work hard, play hard, and so enjoy their life'.
- The school admits pupils aged from three to 11 years of age. There are currently 156 children on roll. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs but there are others who have been identified as needing additional support. The school uses some alternative provision for sport activities.
- The school was last inspected in 2010.
- There is an out of school club that is not managed by the school's proprietor and is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety by:
  - ensuring that all risk assessments are well detailed regarding any issues.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

### Outstanding

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Almost all pupils make exceptional progress in their learning during their time at the school. Consequently, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well above their peers nationally and all are successful in entrance examinations to secure places at selective schools. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the children are progressing well because of the good balance of adult-directed activities and free play.

A key to the school's success is the emphasis placed on reading on a daily basis. In Reception, children are beginning to read words with sounds they know. Across the school, pupils gain in confidence due to the individual support given and read widely from a range of texts. As a result, by Year 6 pupils are accomplished readers. Writing is also of a very high standard. Scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed that pupils were able to write detailed descriptions, and had good punctuation, grammar and spelling. Mental arithmetic is a focus across the school and over time pupils develop confidence at tackling mathematical problems in their heads. Impressive is the fact that a good number of pupils develop instant recall of the times tables by the time they are in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in a broad range of subjects because of the extra help they receive from their teachers and much individual attention.

Pupils respond very well to practical tasks, which help to consolidate their learning. For example, in the Reception class addition and subtraction was made fun by linking the learning to a recent topic on witches and wizards. Pupils rose magnificently to the occasion as they 'flew' across the room on their broomsticks, adding and subtracting from the total. Similarly, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, the aid of a 'word wheel' enabled all pupils to identify how a word changed when the letter 'e' was added to the end of it.

All pupils are taught with sensitivity and much encouragement. Pupils are very well supported and challenged to set themselves high standards in all that they do. Parents and carers are delighted with their children's progress and unanimous in their praise of the school.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

### Outstanding

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are extremely positive about coming to school, and overwhelmingly describe it as a happy and friendly place to learn. Staff are extremely caring and have outstanding relationships with pupils who are all valued as unique individuals. As a consequence, pupils state that they are well looked after and feel safe. Although a small number of responses to the on-line questionnaire indicate a concern about bullying, all of the pupils whom inspectors spoke to were adamant that there is no issue with bullying. In fact, most said how happy and friendly the school is, particularly for new pupils joining the school. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding, and makes a positive contribution to their outstanding learning over time. Throughout their time at the school, pupils are provided with many opportunities to perform in front of others, for example in the Reception class where they perform action rhymes and songs, and in older classes where they read aloud their work and sing solo. Consequently, their confidence and self-esteem is nurtured exceptionally well and social development is excellent. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility, for example all of the oldest pupils are prefects and all have clear roles such as helping the younger pupils at lunchtime. Pupils play a productive part in the community through visits to local homes for the elderly and by fund raising for local and national charities.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop a good, general knowledge of public institutions and services in England. The proprietor has also taken reasonable steps to ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject in school.

Assemblies help to develop pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures well. Consequently, pupils are respectful of others. Pupils understand right from wrong and talk about the fairness of the rules at the school regularly. They learn about many aspects of British culture. For example, younger pupils learn about the role of the police and fire service when studying topics such as people who help us. The school meets all of the regulations for teaching pupils about their own and other cultures. Leaders recognise that planning can be improved further for even more opportunities to be taken by teachers to develop pupils' understanding of the diverse nature of modern British society. Planning in this regard is developing well.

### Quality of teaching

### Outstanding

Teaching is outstanding overall and promotes outstanding achievement over time. Small classes mean that teachers know pupils exceptionally well. Consequently, teachers very effectively tailor the work and how much help they provide to each pupil. Pupils value this and know that they are able to ask for help if they get stuck. In the Kindergarten and Reception, the children's starting points have been accurately identified and work planned so that all progress well. Children engage enthusiastically in a wide range of interesting activities and behave well. The youngest children demonstrate high levels of concentration as they work alongside each other. In Reception, excellent use is made of the outdoor area to capture children's imagination. For example, a group of children enthusiastically re-enacted the story of Hansel and Gretel because of the very thoughtful way that the activities were provided.

Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to explain subjects and to pose very effective questions that check on pupils' understanding and extend their learning. Teachers consistently check pupils' understanding throughout lessons and give extra support when required. Although older pupils are encouraged to use the internet to research topics, the use of information and communication technology as a tool for teaching is slightly limited because of the age and speed of some computers. The teaching of reading is a priority and support staff demonstrate high levels of skill and question pupils very effectively when listening to them read. All pupils read on a daily basis and make excellent progress. In the very best lessons, teachers plan exciting and meaningful learning activities that provide pupils with memorable experiences. For example, an Olympic torch bearer was invited into the school to talk about his experiences. Similarly, in a Year 4 lesson a video was used to highlight similarities and differences between life in Kenya and in England. Consequently, pupils were able to confidently discuss features of their own homes and those found in Kenya.

The assessment of pupils' work is regular and frequent. Teachers ensure that pupils know exactly what to do to improve their work. Teachers provide very effective guidance and feedback to pupils within lessons or through detailed comments in their marking of pupils' work. Mistakes are highlighted and pupils encouraged to do corrections. This encourages pupils to try their best and maintain high standards. Results from tests are used very well to identify any pupils who would benefit from additional support.

### Quality of curriculum

### Outstanding

The curriculum is outstanding. Very well established and detailed schemes of work ensure that pupils make exceptional progress in their reading, writing and mathematics over time. A particularly strong feature is the provision for teaching reading so that from their time in the Kindergarten children are taught about letters and sounds and are heard to read each day. In the junior classes (Key Stage 2), any pupil whose reading is not at the highest level is provided with extra time for reading tuition. Based on the National Curriculum, pupils have a broad and balanced

timetable with particular strengths in the junior classes, including French, performing arts and reasoning skills. This breadth ensures that pupils are very effectively prepared for transferring to secondary schools.

Classroom work is very effectively complemented by a well thought-out and wide range of educational visits. For example, Year 6 visited the East Lancashire railway to simulate an evacuee's experience as part of their work on the Second World War. Consequently, pupils were able to talk knowledgeably about evacuees and how they would have felt as a real evacuee. Pupils have access to instrumental tuition during the school day and this helps them to develop their interests and musical talents very well. Extra-curricular provision is extensive with a very wide range of activities on offer, including sporting and arts-based activities. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the annual skiing trip to France, which is open to parents, carers and other members of the family. Personal, social and health education is very effective. There is a clear emphasis on personal development, with regular personal, social and health education lessons in the junior classes. This actively helps pupils to think about their feelings and the feelings of others. They study major world religions and learn about life in other countries.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

**Good**

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good and all the independent school standards and Early Years Foundation Stage regulations are met. The school has devised a good range of policies and procedures, including the required policies for anti-bullying, risk assessments and complaints. Since the last inspection, the school has rectified the weakness in paediatric first aid training so that there are more than an adequate number of staff who now hold this certificate. The designated child protection officer has received training to the appropriate level and staff are aware of safeguarding procedures. The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is on the school's website for parents and carers to view. All appropriate checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of staff and this information is held on the single central register.

The staff handbook has clear guidelines on all school matters relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety. Risk assessments are generally good but, on occasions, lack some detail. The fire procedures are suitable, and all fire equipment is checked and fire drills are documented. The building is generally well maintained. The quality of day-to-day support, advice and guidance to pupils is very good. Registration time is used well to foster relationships and discuss homework, together with any issues from the previous day. Pupils are supervised well, and the start and end of the school day are well-managed. Pupils know about the importance of regular exercise and older pupils have the opportunity to learn how to ride a bicycle safely on the road. Pupils say they feel safe in school as 'there are always people around'.

### **Leadership and management**

**Outstanding**

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher and staff are successful in ensuring that all pupils receive very good all-round education and achieve exceptionally well. Pupils are valued and thrive in a happy and caring environment. The headteacher inspires all staff to strive for excellence and leads by example. The headteacher knows much about the classroom experiences of pupils, and how effective the teaching and curriculum are at helping pupils to benefit from their time at the school. The headteacher is aware that evaluations of the quality of teaching are not formally recorded. She is currently developing the school's procedures to ensure that all of the evaluations carried out are recorded along with any improvements required in order to sustain the high quality of teaching. Staff morale is good and there is a shared commitment to improve the school. Staff retention levels are very high and all staff questionnaires confirmed how much staff enjoy working at the school. However, a very small number indicate that they would welcome more opportunities for professional development. The headteacher knows the school extremely well and has rightly identified improving the learning environment for the youngest children, including the improved use of the outdoor area, as a

priority.

The premises and accommodation comply with all requirements. A prospectus and handbook provides all relevant information to parents and carers. Reports on pupils' progress are sent to parents and carers twice yearly. The introduction of the school website has further improved the quality and access to information for parents and carers. The safeguarding policy and complaints procedure meet all regulations and are now accessible on the website.

Parents and carers are full of praise for the school and say that their children 'love coming to school'. This is attributed to the high levels of personal care given to their children. They say that the headteacher 'always goes that extra mile' and are very appreciative of the individual support given to their children. A small minority of parents and carers indicated on Parent View that the school did not always respond well to concerns. However, this was at odds with what parents and carers told inspectors and 100% of parents and carers stated that they would recommend the school to others.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111479
<b>Inspection number</b>	420188
<b>DfE registration number</b>	895/6013

This inspection was carried out 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Co-educational Day School
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	156
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	29
<b>Proprietor</b>	Montague Place Ltd
<b>Chief Executive</b>	Mark Peters
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Dallimore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 February 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£4,440 to £6,525
<b>Telephone number</b>	01565 633177
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