

Woodhill Preparatory School

Brook Lane, Botley, Hampshire SO30 2ER

Inspection dates

4–6 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- School leaders and the proprietor do not have the necessary knowledge or skills to make sure that all the independent school standards relating to safeguarding and welfare, health and safety are met. They have not followed the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- School leaders have not ensured that all the required information about the school is published on the school's website.
- School leaders and the proprietor have not implemented robust systems for the appointment of staff.
- School leaders do not implement the school's health and safety policy effectively. The school premises are not maintained to a high enough standard.
- School leaders have failed in their duty to draw up a suitable risk assessment policy and exclusion policy. There is no accessibility plan in place.
- School self-evaluation is weak. School leaders and the proprietor do not have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They do not monitor and evaluate the work of the school. There is no plan in place to support school improvement.
- School leaders have not implemented effective systems and procedures for record-keeping. They do not follow up concerns with sufficient rigour.
- School leaders do not check and monitor pupils' progress well enough.
- The proprietor has not put suitable arrangements in place to hold school leaders and staff to account.
- Pupils' welfare is inadequate, because school leaders do not implement health and safety arrangements with sufficient rigour.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the early years achieve well. Leaders have a clear vision for improvement. Adults support children to settle quickly and make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils achieve well. They reach above-average standards by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Relationships are strong. Pupils are polite, courteous and supportive of one another.
- Teachers know pupils well. They create a positive and conducive environment for learning, which promotes good achievement.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take urgent action to remedy weaknesses in safeguarding procedures and actively promote pupils' welfare by:
 - ensuring that safeguarding procedures follow the latest government guidelines, and meet statutory requirements and the independent school standards
 - publishing an up-to-date safeguarding policy on the school website
 - ensuring that staff appointments comply with all safeguarding requirements
 - ensuring that the premises are maintained to a high standard and that the health and safety policy is implemented effectively
 - drawing up a risk assessment policy that is implemented effectively, and making sure that all risk assessments are completed appropriately and evaluated regularly.
- Improve the quality of leadership and managements by:
 - ensuring that the proprietor and school leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills to make sure that all statutory requirements are met, including those related to safeguarding, and that school policies are implemented, monitored and reviewed
 - increasing the rigour of all record-keeping procedures and regularly reviewing their effectiveness
 - monitoring and evaluating the work of the school more effectively and drawing up a suitable improvement plan to bring about rapid improvement
 - making sure that leaders and staff are held to account for pupils' performance and improving the work of the school
 - ensuring that the proprietor and school leaders monitor the progress of pupils and have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' progress
 - making sure that all of the required statutory policies are published on the school's website and are made available to parents
 - drawing up a suitable accessibility plan.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 6, 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- Ensure that the relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- Ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and taking appropriate action to reduce risks that are identified (paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).

- Ensure that the premises and the accommodation and facilities at the school are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured and that external lighting is provided to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises (paragraphs 22, 25 and 27(b)).
- Ensure that the provision of information includes: the proprietor's full name; address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays; a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted; the safeguarding policy; the exclusion policy; and particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(2), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(3), 32(3)(a) and 32(3)(e)).
- Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1) and 34(1)(a)).
- Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1) and 34(1)(b)).
- Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1) and 34(1)(c)).
- Ensure that the school complies with paragraph 3 of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 by drawing up a suitable accessibility plan.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- School leaders and the proprietor cannot be certain that pupils are kept safe. The school's procedures to safeguard pupils do not meet statutory requirements and give serious cause for concern. Although they endeavour to promote a caring and supportive ethos, leaders' attention to their most important responsibility, to keep children safe, has been undermined by their casual regard for upholding their legal duty. They have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- School leaders have not implemented effective procedures for monitoring the work of the school. Checks on the school's work are haphazard. As a result, school leaders do not fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They do not evaluate their actions. They do not have a plan in place to bring about the necessary improvements.
- School leaders have not ensured that clear systems and procedures are in place to check or follow up routine, day-to-day activities, such as the recording of the administration of first aid, behaviour concerns and risk assessments. Although these records are kept, the attention to detail is lacking. Concerns that are raised, including parental concerns, are not followed up with sufficient rigour.
- School leaders lack the knowledge and skills necessary to make sure that all statutory policies are in place and provided as required on the school website. For example, the school has failed in its duty to produce an accessibility plan. There is no risk assessment policy or exclusion policy, which is required to meet the independent school standards.
- The health and safety policy is not implemented effectively enough, because risk assessments are weak and some aspects of the school premises are not maintained to a high enough standard. At the time of the inspection, not all external lighting was working, which does not meet the requirements of the independent school standards.
- There is no doubt that school leaders aim to ensure that pupils are happy and that they are educated in small classes, but their aim of high expectations in all aspects of the school's work has not been realised in recent years.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a broad and balanced range of subjects to support their learning and there are some extra-curricular activities for pupils to take part in at the end of the school day. There is a strong emphasis on English and mathematics, with a range of opportunities for pupils to develop good spelling, handwriting and grammar skills. The school's policy is that pupils are expected to learn their multiplication tables and use the four operations within mathematics to answer calculations.
- School leaders have ensured that pupils develop some understanding of British values. They explore the rule of law, tolerance, liberty and different faiths and beliefs during personal, social, health and economic education. Mutual respect is embedded in the ethos of the school.

Governance

- The school is led by a sole proprietor. There is no governing body. The proprietor remains adamant that the school aims to provide pupils with a good education. This has not been fully achieved in recent years because insufficient attention has been given to monitoring the work of the school.

- The proprietor has not put systems in place to monitor the performance of the headteacher or staff. They are not held to account for the progress of pupils, or improvement in the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Insufficient attention has been given to making sure that pupils are safe. Some parts of the school site are hazardous for pupils. Security systems lack rigour.
- School leaders and the proprietor have not implemented a rigorous system for the appointment of new staff. They have not made clear their commitment to safeguarding in their advertisements for new staff. Interview procedures do not find out about candidates' suitability to safeguard pupils. Record-keeping is weak.
- The safeguarding policy was updated in line with the most up-to-date guidance issued by the Secretary of State during the inspection. As a result, it has not yet been fully implemented. The policy was not available, as required, on the school website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know their pupils well and plan lessons to meet the learning needs of each individual pupil. Relationships are strong and teachers provide pupils with plenty of individual attention when needed.
- Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils are productive and diligent, because teachers have high expectations of their achievement. In most lessons, the most able pupils are regularly challenged to achieve the very best they can.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning during the lesson and use this information well to adjust learning. This information is also used well to plan subsequent lessons for each pupil. Additional individual support is provided to consolidate learning and help pupils to fully understand new learning.
- Resources are used skilfully to support learning. Classrooms are well organised, with lively, interesting and helpful displays of information and celebrations of pupils' work.
- Teachers regularly hear pupils read. However, phonics is not taught systematically. This hampers pupils' grasp of the skills they need to build unfamiliar words, particularly in the early stages of learning to read.
- Teachers track the progress of pupils and use this information well to support each individual pupil. In a few lessons, pupils, including the most able, are not given work that is challenging enough. This means that pupils in these lessons do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questions well to check pupils' understanding and to help develop their thinking. This was evident in a mathematics lesson when the teacher checked pupils' knowledge of prime numbers and posed additional challenging questions to ascertain the depth of pupils' knowledge.
- Teachers use homework tasks successfully to extend pupils' learning. Teachers respond to the completed homework by discussing the tasks with each pupil individually.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare
Inadequate
Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because some aspects of the school's work do not ensure that pupils are safe.
- There is a lack of rigour in catering for the welfare of pupils; for example, the school does not implement its health and safety arrangements well enough.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and the parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire agree that their children feel safe.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying in school. This was confirmed by the scrutiny of the school's bullying log which contained no entries. Parents agree that the school deals effectively with bullying. Those who spoke to inspectors during the inspection say that they have no knowledge of any bullying.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to be successful learners. Their self-confidence and self-esteem are strong. This is because the school promotes positive attitudes to one another, and because adults and pupils treat each other with respect and courtesy.
- Pupils willingly take part in debating ideas. The strong relationships evident between pupils and adults enable them to put forward their ideas positively. Pupils know that their ideas will be accepted and considered.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are respectful and polite. They take turns and share. Older pupils care for younger pupils during lunchtimes and playtimes. Pupils play well together and listen carefully to instructions, obeying them straight away.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their above-average attendance. Parents commented that their children do not like missing school and would come more often if they could. Pupils arrive punctually to school and to lessons. They have positive attitudes to learning and are well prepared for their learning each day, bringing the right equipment needed to do their work.
- Pupils are self-disciplined and well mannered. They move around the school calmly and responsibly. Pupils show great respect to older pupils such as the head girls when they are greeted by them on arrival to school.

Outcomes for pupils
Good

- Pupils achieve well. Almost all pupils take entrance exams to independent secondary schools of their choice. Many take examinations at more than one school. They successfully pass the examinations and can choose from a number of local independent schools. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils take the national curriculum tests. Pupils consistently achieve well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. A significant proportion of the most able pupils achieve high scores.
- The school administers standardised tests for all pupils in Year 1 to Year 6 each year. The results show, that in all year groups, pupils' achievement is well above that of other pupils nationally in English and mathematics, given their age. The most able pupils achieve exceptionally well in each year group.

- Pupils develop a love of reading at an early age. The well-stocked library provides pupils with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction reading material, which they can read in school or at home. Pupils have good comprehension skills. Some younger pupils struggle with building unfamiliar words because their phonic knowledge is less well developed.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- As in the rest of the school, safeguarding arrangements in the early years are inadequate. This is because recruitment procedures are not robust. Safeguarding is not given a high enough priority when advertising and interviewing staff. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the early years provision is inadequate. Despite this, there are significant strengths in provision, teaching and outcomes for children in the early years.
- The early years leaders have a strong vision for improvement. They have a good understanding of the progress each child is making and make accurate judgements on pupils' attainment.
- Children arrive in the Nursery and Kindergarten with skills and abilities that are above those typical for their age. Some children have very well-developed skills on entry to the Nursery class. Many have very good language skills. This was evident when one boy described, with very mature language, how his mummy had taken the core out of his apple with 'a tool with a handle and a metal piece, twisting it and pulling the core out'.
- Children settle quickly into the Nursery and Kindergarten classes because adults take time to discuss each individual child's needs with parents before they start school. Adults then set up the provision suited to the needs and interests of every child.
- Parents are very pleased that they are able to contribute to the learning journey for their child by adding 'wow' moments of achievement that their child has demonstrated while at home. Parents are provided with useful information about how well their child is progressing at the regular meetings with staff.
- All staff in the Nursery and Kindergarten are well trained and attend training for early years staff regularly alongside other early years teachers and the early years team in the local authority. Staff assessments of children's learning are accurate. This was confirmed at the end of the last academic year when their assessments were moderated by the local authority.
- Children understand the routines in the Nursery and Kindergarten very well. They respond well to adults when they move from one activity to another, showing kindness and consideration to each other during the school day, including at playtimes.
- Children thoroughly enjoyed a dance session delivered by a parent. They listened carefully, responded positively and enjoyed joining in with the singing and dancing activities, which supported their physical development very well.

School details

Unique reference number	116540
DfE registration number	850/6014
Inspection number	10020950

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Preparatory day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Number of part-time pupils	13
Proprietor	Marjorie Dacombe
Headteacher	Mike Dacombe
Annual fees (day pupils)	Nursery (full days) £6,225 Kindergarten and Years 1–6 £6,693
Telephone number	01489 781112
Website	www.woodhillschoolbotley.co.uk
Email address	Office-b@woodhill.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2012

Information about this school

- Woodhill Preparatory School opened in 1957. It is run by a sole proprietor from Woodhill Schools Limited. There is no governing body. The school aims are 'Happy pupils, small classes, high expectations'.
- The school is registered as an independent co-educational day school for boys and girls. It is registered to accept 240 pupils aged three to 11 years. The Nursery accommodates 13 children part time.
- There are no pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are no pupils with education, health and care plans or with a statement of special educational needs.
- There are no disadvantaged pupils at the school.

- The last inspection was in December 2012. At the time of the last inspection, the school operated on two sites. One site closed in 2014. The school now operates on a single site in the village of Botley.
- The school runs before- and after-school provision for pupils on the school site.
- The school does not provide or use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Inspectors also carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the early years leaders.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils through informal discussions and during a meeting with a group of pupils selected by inspectors.
- Inspectors also considered parents' views through informal discussions at the start and end of the school day, through the 10 responses to the Parent View online survey and the free-text responses submitted by some parents.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 16 members of staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including the school's own evaluation of its work, curriculum plans and schemes of work and records of pupils' achievement. Information about safeguarding arrangements was checked, as were the single central record, risk assessments and a range of policies.
- All the education independent school standards were checked during this inspection.

Inspection team

Ann Henderson, lead inspector

Chris Corr

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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