

The Grey House Preparatory School

Mount Pleasant Road, Hartley Wintney, Hook, Hampshire RG27 8PW

Inspection dates

31 October–2 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are polite, courteous and well behaved. They take pride in their appearance and their work. Respect for others underpins pupils' experience in this school.
- Teachers and support staff know pupils well. Relationships are good. Pupils are provided with individual attention which enables them to make good progress over time.
- All pupils are prepared well for secondary education. Pupils successfully gain entrance to the school of their choice.
- The provision in early years is good. The curriculum enables children to make strong progress. Children are well prepared for learning when they start Form I.
- A wide and interesting range of learning opportunities exist within the school. The curriculum is widened through a wealth of interesting and exciting additional activities which enrich pupils' learning experiences.
- Record-keeping procedures are not wholly effective.
- School leaders have maintained the good quality of education at The Grey House. They have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The work to keep pupils safe is effective. The school provides a nurturing environment where pupils feel safe and are able to flourish.
- School leaders' monitoring of pupils' progress does not routinely identify strengths and weaknesses in their performance. Staff are not consistently held to account.
- School leaders evaluate the work of the school, but this is not sharp enough to pinpoint the most important areas of need linked to improving outcomes for pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. However, some teaching lacks precision. Tasks are not adjusted routinely in lessons to meet the emerging needs of pupils, particularly the most able.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistently strong.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring that school leaders monitor the progress of pupils and have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' progress
 - ensuring that the proprietor and school leaders monitor and evaluate the work of the school more effectively and draw up a suitable improvement plan linked to improving outcomes for all groups of pupils
 - making sure school leaders and staff are held to account for pupils' performance and improving the work of the school
 - increasing the rigour of all record-keeping procedures and regularly reviewing their effectiveness.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that all groups of pupils, but especially the most able, make rapid progress, by:
 - making sure that teachers use assessment information precisely before lessons to plan challenging tasks
 - making effective use of informal assessment in lessons to provide further challenge or support to pupils when needed.
- Ensure the quality of phonics teaching is consistently strong, so that pupils who struggle to gain early reading skills thoroughly develop their phonics knowledge to enable them to decipher unfamiliar words and read fluently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They have maintained the good quality of education for pupils since the previous inspection. The headteacher has high expectations and leads the school with passion and commitment. She regularly shares her ambition, 'for the school to continue to grow and flourish and for pupils to be happy', with staff, parents and pupils.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school. They are very positive about the quality and range of experiences their children encounter throughout the school day and through the wider curriculum. They value the broader opportunities the school provides for their children, such as the enrichment days, where pupils of different ages, including siblings, can learn alongside each other.
- School leaders have reviewed the curriculum and assessment systems in recent years in line with the school's aims and ethos. The breadth of subjects taught and the rich range of additional extra-curricular opportunities provided have a very positive impact on pupils' personal development. School leaders' and the proprietors' aim is for every child to 'achieve their potential in academic achievement, aesthetic appreciation and spiritual awareness'. Pupils are rewarded not only for their academic achievement, but also for their conduct, and any positive, commendable actions they make while at school or within the community. These are honoured during celebration assemblies.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced through visits to places of interest, such as Windsor Castle and Marwell Zoo. Theatre trips to see performances such as 'Good night Mr Tom', at Woking Theatre and 'Never, never land' at the Tree House Theatre provide pupils with the opportunity to experience live productions. Regular workshops, such as the Young Shakespeare workshop and the Great Fire of London workshop, enhance pupils' understanding of history and literature. In addition to this, pupils learn about civil and public institutions through visits to cathedrals such as those in Winchester and Salisbury, and attending the Commonwealth Service in Westminster Abbey.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Equality and diversity are celebrated. Through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programmes, pupils learn about their rights as children, crime and punishment, and government institutions in Britain and Europe. They learn about taking action in the community to conserve resources, recycling and looking after the local environment.
- School leaders evaluate the work of the school, but currently this is not sharply focused on the most important aspects required to improve outcomes for pupils even further. The school improvement plan does not identify the most important actions the school needs to take to ensure all groups of pupils make the progress they are capable of making and that the most able pupils make rapid progress. This is because school leaders' monitoring of pupils' learning is not precise enough to identify what pupils do well and what they need to do to make even better progress.
- School leaders have systems and procedures in place to record day-to-day routine activities, such as the administration of first aid, behaviour logs and any parental concerns raised. However, these are not routinely followed up to check whether their actions have

been effective.

Governance

- The proprietors are passionate about the school and are keen to ensure its future success. They have successfully developed the new Nursery at West Green, to provide high-quality Nursery provision for children aged two to four.
- There is no governing body.
- One of the proprietors meets daily with the headteacher to provide guidance and support. The proprietors do not monitor the performance of the school and its leaders well enough to enable them to hold school leaders to account.
- The proprietors do not monitor and evaluate the quality of education with sufficient rigour. As a result, they do not pick up any differences in achievement between different groups of pupils quickly enough. Planning for improvement is not focused enough on improving outcomes for all groups of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff know pupils well. The school culture supports a consistent approach to keeping pupils safe. Staff are kept up to date with current guidance. Regular training for all staff in safeguarding and child protection, including the government's 'Prevent' duty, enable everyone to work together well to provide effective guidance and support for all pupils.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using computers and mobile technologies. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping themselves safe, which pupils articulate well. They know that regular fire drills enable them to know what to do if the school buildings had to be evacuated. Pupils also understand the importance of keeping safe near water and when swimming.
- The school's safeguarding policy and child protection policies are up to date and published on the school's website. They are in line with the current guidance issued by the Secretary of State. All relevant checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children are in place. The single central record meets requirements.
- Parents are confident that the school keeps their children safe. One parent of a child in the Nursery class reflected, 'It's a lovely, safe environment, with caring and enthusiastic staff.' Another parent in the main school commented, 'My daughter is happy, safe and making brilliant progress with her education.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers form positive, nurturing relationships with pupils, built on mutual respect and trust. All adults seek to get the best out of pupils, providing them with helpful support and guidance. Routines are clear, and pupils know that teachers have high expectations of their work and behaviour.
- Classrooms are calm and well organised. Helpful displays of useful information support pupils' learning in lessons. Pupils' learning is celebrated and displayed in classrooms and

around the school. This helps pupils to learn in a purposeful, supportive environment.

- Pupils seek help when they need it, and want to do well. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and convey this well in lessons. As a result, pupils engage positively with their learning, respond enthusiastically to support and advice from staff, and settle quickly to their work.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' handwriting, presentation and spelling. Handwriting is regularly taught. Teachers check that pupils' spellings are correct and that they understand the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Homework supports pupils' learning effectively, building on the skills and concepts learned during the school day. Teachers provide regular feedback to pupils, which supports their learning at home.
- Specialist subject teachers bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise and experience to their teaching. Pupils benefit from language and music specialists, sports coaches, and experts in science and computing. Pupils profit widely from this expertise, which results in them achieving well.
- School leaders are developing a new assessment system which is at an early stage of implementation. It is beginning to support teachers to make accurate and timely assessments to support even better progress.
- Teachers usually provide helpful feedback to pupils, but this is not always used well to support pupils to improve their learning and show improvements in their work.
- Some teachers do not consistently use the information they gather about pupils' learning and progress to plan lessons to meet the varying abilities of pupils within their class. In some classes, the work is the same for pupils of all abilities. This means that the work is too easy for some pupils and not challenging enough for others. A minority of teachers do not adjust tasks and activities sufficiently well in lessons to address misconceptions and tackle misunderstandings. Some do not routinely provide additional challenge for the most able pupils in their day-to-day learning. As a result, some pupils do not consistently make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Most pupils read well, with fluency, enthusiasm and expression. However, some pupils who find learning to read more difficult are hampered because their phonic knowledge has not been developed well enough. The early teaching of phonics is successful in Reception and Form I, but those pupils who take longer to grasp the early stages of reading struggle because the teaching of phonics is not as strong as pupils progress through the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and listen carefully to adults and other pupils during lessons.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that adults will listen carefully to any concerns they may have. Pupils are able to talk confidently about how to keep safe online

and in the community.

- A small minority of parents raised concerns through the online questionnaire, Parent View, about bullying. Inspectors considered this carefully, checking pupils' views and school logs during the inspection. They found that pupils understand about different types of bullying. Pupils say bullying is rare, but they know that if they had a problem of any kind, an adult would be quick to support them and resolve the issue as quickly as possible. One parent who spoke to inspectors reflected that behaviour was 'excellent and if any bullying happened the school must quickly deal with it'.
- Adults support pupils' individual and personal needs well. They are suitably trained to support pupils who have specific medical needs. The school works well with other agencies to seek guidance and additional support when necessary. As a result, pupils thrive and succeed because of the support they receive.
- Pupils know and accept that other people may have different beliefs, needs and family structures. They understand the importance of eating a healthy diet. A well-planned and delivered PSHE curriculum means that pupils' personal development is strong.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's strong ethos is reflected in the positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are courteous, thoughtful and respectful. Pupils readily greet adults with 'good morning', at the start of the school day, without prompting. They have very good manners, holding open doors for one another and for adults, taking turns and sharing, and are supportive of one another during lessons and in their play.
- Pupils are very smart in their school uniform and wear it with pride. They are very proud of their school, too. As one pupil stated, 'It's brilliant!' As they move around the school, and during breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils are considerate and self-disciplined. The school is a calm and orderly environment, where pupils' self-esteem and confidence flourishes.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and look forward to the wide range of additional learning opportunities the school provides, such as the opportunity to learn a musical instrument or to learn ballet. This eagerness to come to school is reflected in their very good attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Form VI is above the national average. Pupils are well prepared for learning when they begin secondary education. Over time, pupils consistently pass entrance examinations to the selective school of their choice. Some achieving the top 25% of marks, some the top 10% of marks, and some are awarded scholarships to their chosen school.
- School leaders have not entered pupils into public examinations over the last two years, due to the changes in the curriculum being taught. However, they have introduced a system of assessing pupils' learning and devise appropriate targets for pupils to achieve in each year group. This assessment system demonstrates that pupils make strong progress

over time.

- Pupils' progress accelerates in key stage 2. Evidence from pupils' work in books shows that pupils reach good standards, not only in English and mathematics but in all subjects taught. Their work is of a good quality, particularly their presentation, handwriting, spelling and punctuation.
- In mathematics, pupils learn a wide range of fundamental aspects of mathematics and learn to apply their knowledge to solve problems. In Form III, pupils were learning about inverse operations and finding methods to successfully calculate the missing number in a sequence or number sentence. Pupils showed a good understanding of mathematical operations and were able to accurately and successfully find the correct answer.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities to learn across a broad range of subjects. Pupils have opportunities to learn French, Spanish and ballet. Older pupils in key stage 2 begin to learn Latin. Pupils are positive about the opportunities to take part in a wide range of sporting activities, both within the school day and beyond. Pupils are successful in national swimming competitions and relish the opportunities provided for them to learn to play golf, football, cricket and judo, to name but a few.
- Pupils get off to a good start in learning phonics. They are able to use the sounds that letters make to build and read unfamiliar words. However, pupils who do not grasp this skill in the early years and Form I struggle to tackle more complex words as they get older because the teaching of phonics is not consistently strong.
- The most able pupils typically make good progress over time. However, work is not always sufficiently well adapted to maintain a high level of challenge in lessons. As a result, these pupils do not make the consistently outstanding progress of which they are capable.

Early years provision

Good

- Children begin in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are well above those found typically for children of this age. They are articulate, self-assured and ready to learn. They make good progress over time and are very well prepared for learning at the start of Form I.
- Children in the Nursery class settle quickly and enjoy the broad range of activities that are available for them, both inside and outdoors. Staff ensure that children are well supervised at all times and carefully plan activities to meet the learning needs of these, the youngest children in the school.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children's learning is regularly assessed to identify what children can do and what their next steps in learning should be. This enables adults to plan effective learning opportunities to ensure that children make good progress across all areas of learning. However, leaders do not use the information well enough to identify trends or strengths and weaknesses in children's learning over time to make longer-term plans to improve provision even further.
- During the inspection, children in the Nursery class enjoyed the cooperative games they played, as seen when using the large parachute. Adults supported children well to work together to inflate the parachute and to bring it to rest. Children particularly enjoyed

counting together as the class teddy bear bounced around on the parachute.

- Children in the Reception class enjoy hearing and recalling stories, such as 'Can't you sleep, little bear' by Martin Waddell and Barbara Firth. Children were able to access a range of drawing, writing and creative activities connected to the story. Children particularly enjoyed building the bear's 'cave' in the classroom. One group of children were able to explain clearly the challenges they found when trying to take the blankets into the cave.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes behave well, listening carefully to adults and happily playing alongside one another, taking turns and sharing in activities. This is because adults are sensitive and responsive to children's needs and interests and develop positive supportive relationships. Children understand their boundaries and how to keep themselves safe.
- Early years leaders have a good understanding of how to ensure the welfare, health and safety of children. They carry out daily risk assessments of activities and equipment. They make sure that the appropriate numbers of qualified staff are deployed at all times.
- Parents are very positive about the new early years provision in the Nursery. They welcome opportunities to contribute to children's learning journeys by completing 'wow' certificates to show achievements their child has accomplished at home.
- All the statutory requirements for early years and independent school standards relating to the early years are met.

School details

Unique reference number	116546
DfE registration number	850/6029
Inspection number	10025976

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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Number of part-time pupils	28
Proprietor	J P McMonigall, J G McMonigall and O R McMonigall
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	Chrissie Allen
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,816–£3,512
Telephone number	01252 842353
Website	www.greyhouseschool.com
Email address	schooloffice@grey-house.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 March 2012

Information about this school

- The Grey House Preparatory School opened in 1943. It is run by three proprietors, the son-in-law and two grandchildren of the original owner.
- There is no governing body.
- The school's aim is: 'to provide first-class teaching within a happy, caring environment where children are encouraged to develop lively, enquiring minds and to acquire confidence in all aspects of school life.'
- The school is registered as an independent co-educational day school for boys and girls.

There are 140 pupils aged two to 11 years. The Nursery accommodates 28 children part time.

- The proprietors opened the Nursery school in September 2016, it is situated about two miles from the main school site. The address of the Nursery provision is: The Grey House Nursery School at West Green, Thackhams Lane, Hartley Wintney, Hampshire, RG27 8JG. This is the first inspection of this provision.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is well below the national average.
- There are no disadvantaged pupils at the school.
- The last inspection was in March 2012. At the time of the last inspection, the school operated on one site.
- 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. The lead inspector heard three pupils read.
- Meetings were held with two of the proprietors, 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 considered parents' views through informal discussions at the start and end of the school day, through the 42 responses to the Parent View online survey and the free-text responses submitted by some parents.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 13 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, 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

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gerard Strong

Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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