

Athelstan House School

36 Percy Road, Hampton, Middlesex TW12 2LA

Inspection dates

14–16 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Insufficient evidence

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The proprietor and headteacher have not ensured that they have kept up to date with the requirements of the independent school standards. Consequently, not all of the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher has not kept up to date with the latest statutory guidance for education regarding the school's checks and procedures for monitoring and review.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has a caring and supportive ethos. The proprietor and headteacher have focused on ensuring that the quality of care and teaching remains good while managing the planned closure of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Staff model warm, positive relationships and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This enables pupils to behave exceptionally well and treat others with respect.
- Staff understand pupils' needs well. Teachers plan and provide a range of interesting activities to motivate pupils. The quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make are consistently good and outcomes remain high.
- The curriculum is appropriately planned and provides a broad range of learning experiences for pupils. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, suitably preparing them for life in modern Britain.

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 annex to the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that all of the independent school standards are met and all policies and practice pay due regard to the latest statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school does not meet all of the independent school standards. Although some of the unmet standards were swiftly rectified by the headteacher during the course of the inspection, the standards relating to the provision of information, including the manner in which complaints are handled, are not met.
- Following a sharp decline in pupil numbers, the school has informed the Department for Education (DfE) of its closure on 6 July 2018. The school permanently closed its early years and Year 1 provision at the end of the academic year 2016/17. Five pupils remain on roll in Year 2. Leaders have been honest about the financial challenges in maintaining a declining school roll. They acknowledge that they have not kept abreast of the latest statutory guidance or, in the last year, on top of whole-school development planning and review. They have focused on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' personal development and well-being. Consequently, the school has continued to meet all the independent standards linked to the quality of education provided and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- In practice, safeguarding at the school is effective. However, leaders acknowledge that they have not kept up to date with some of the requirements of the independent school standards. For example, although leaders have ensured that detailed risk assessments are drawn up and appropriate action is taken to reduce the risks identified, the school does not have a written risk assessment policy. Recruitment checks were in place, but not all are recorded in the required format.
- The headteacher has created a culture of care, where a clear message prevails that only the best education will do, even as the school is preparing to close. A system for tracking pupils' progress against key skills in the national curriculum is in place. The headteacher and staff meet regularly to discuss pupils' progress and plan the next steps for each pupil's learning.
- The well-constructed curriculum includes carefully considered visits to enrich pupils' learning experiences. It is a strength of the school. Broad and balanced, it gives equal weight to academic achievement and personal development. As a result, pupils are considerate and thoughtful to others. They accept differences and are respectful of all people. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is carefully threaded through the majority of curriculum subjects.
- Parents and carers are very positive and confident about the quality of the school's work. They value the small size and high staff-to-pupil ratios as well as the strong focus on celebrating the uniqueness of each individual pupil. They are particularly complimentary about the positive impact the school has on their children's well-being and attitudes to learning and school.

Governance

- The proprietor demonstrates a strong commitment to the achievement and well-being of pupils at the school but has not kept up to date with the requirements of the independent school standards. As the school prepares to close, funding has been prioritised on staffing

and resources for teaching and learning rather than the school premises. As a consequence, not all of the independent school standards are met.

- The proprietor has not been curious or thorough enough in checking that published policies and procedures accurately reflect current guidance and so some key information is not up to date or readily available to parents. No policy exists outlining the school's arrangements for dealing with pupil exclusion. Much of the information on the school's website is a year out of date and omits the key reporting requirements specified by the independent school standards. No particulars were available on the website regarding the school's provision for pupils who have education, health and care plans, or for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Some of the school's key policies were either not available on the website, were out of date or were lacking in key detail. As a result, parents do not have up-to-date, clear information about school exclusions, complaints, health and safety or key school performance information as required by the independent school standards.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the school has an accessibility plan. Consequently, arrangements have not been made to meet the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Despite leaders' inattention to the latest statutory guidance, pupils at the school are happy and safe. The headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, is effective in ensuring that staff understand how to raise concerns. Staff are vigilant and take good care of the pupils at the school.
- At the time of the inspection, the school's most up-to-date safeguarding policy was not available on the school's website and did not reflect the most recent statutory guidance from 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016). Leaders have since made sure that they, and all staff, are aware of the latest statutory guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers establish positive working relationships with their pupils. This is because the learning climate in the class and around the school reflects the ways in which the proprietor, headteacher and staff value every pupil and promote their self-confidence and resilience.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan and provide a range of interesting activities to motivate pupils. For example, pupils happily talked about their study of Kandinsky's concentric circles; they eagerly discussed how they had experimented with colour, light and shade, sharing their self-portraits with creative backdrops. These portraits, along with the careful studies in their art books, demonstrate their skilful use of shading and creative use of pattern and colour.
- Teachers provide pupils with effective help precisely when it is needed. Teachers are adept at using questions to check whether pupils have understood tasks or are stuck.
- The quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make is consistently good across all areas of learning. Occasionally, opportunities are not provided to challenge a few of the

most able so that they make even stronger progress, particularly in science and mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are encouraged to stay healthy. For example, pupils engage energetically in movement activities between learning sessions and know that exercise, drinking water and eating healthy food are important.
- Teachers help pupils to understand differences in people's backgrounds and cultures. For example, pupils visits different religious places of worship, including the local church and Buddhist temple. Families are invited to contribute to the cultural celebrations of the main faith groups in Britain. Also, opportunities are taken to expand pupils' regular study of the French language to include cultural activities like the school's French market day.
- The headteacher has been proactive in ensuring that opportunities are made for pupils to socialise with their peers in local preparatory schools, to support their transition into larger settings. Joint trips and workshops are a key feature of this planned support.
- During the inspection, pupils learned about the hurtful effects of bullying, attending an anti-bullying workshop at a local preparatory school. They know bullying is wrong and say they are confident that staff will always help them if they have a worry or concern. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and the importance of not sharing personal information online with strangers. Pupils say they feel safe and happy at school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils respond positively to the high expectations for behaviour and care for others, set by all staff at the school. During social time, pupils behave exceptionally well, chatting happily together over lunch. They show consideration for each other while outside on the playground, playing together and sharing ideas, equipment and resources.
- Pupils know how to behave, both in lessons and around the school, resulting in a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Pupils' excellent behaviour has a positive impact on their learning, contributing to the high standards achieved.
- Pupils enjoy going to school and this is reflected in pupils' very high attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their school life. From strong starting points on entry to the school, pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in curriculum subjects, sustaining high outcomes.
- The teaching of reading is a strength at the school. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and frequently. Pupils enjoy their reading and have access to a good range of reading materials. The initial reading skills, well taught by staff, mean that pupils are able to make

sense of unfamiliar words in the texts they read. Pupils were heard reading with increasing fluency and intonation, as they learn to read with good understanding.

- Regular opportunities to read and discuss their work contribute to pupils' strong progress, particularly in literacy. Pupils use their knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of texts effectively to write creatively. They apply their good understanding of grammar and the use of punctuation, and their excellent spelling, to make improvements on their written work.
- In mathematics, pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well. Pupils use their knowledge and understanding of number well. However, there are fewer opportunities for them to solve problems of increasing complexity and to reason mathematically.

Early years provision

**Insufficient evidence –
amnesty granted**

- The school permanently closed its early years provision in July 2017.

School details

Unique reference number	102941
DfE registration number	318/6060
Inspection number	10008547

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	6 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mrs E M Woolf
Headteacher	Ms Jill Chatt-Collins
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,760
Telephone number	020 8979 1045
Website	www.athelstanhouseschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@athelstanhouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 September 2009

Information about this school

- Since the school's last inspection in September 2009, the school has experienced a reduction in staffing following a significant decline, year on year, in pupil numbers. During this time, the school struggled to fill its pupil places, as local feeder schools started offering their own pre-preparatory provision. The school is closing permanently on 6 July 2018.
- The school was due to close fully on 7 July 2017. However, following parental consultation on 6 June 2017, the proprietor agreed to keep the school open for current Year 2 pupils. This decision was made to minimise any disruption to these pupils' education and their preparation for the seven-plus preparatory entrance tests. The school has officially changed its registration details for the academic year 2017/18 with the

Department for Education (DfE). The school's early years and Year 1 provision closed on 7 July 2017.

- The school is a non-selective independent pre-preparatory school, located on a single site.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There are no pupils on roll who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The proprietor runs on-site before- and after-school care for pupils attending other local schools in the area.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector conducted lesson visits in the Year 2 class, met with the five pupils on roll and spoke informally with pupils and staff throughout the inspection. Pupils were observed during playtimes, at lunchtimes and as they moved around the school. The inspector also listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor, the headteacher and a part-time teacher. The headteacher accompanied the inspector during a tour of the school site to check compliance with the independent school standards. The inspector also scrutinised records of checks on the premises, including risk assessments and fire safety records.
- The inspector scrutinised documents provided by the school, including the school's own self-evaluation and information on pupils' progress, information relating to attendance, school policies and the school's own records of checks to safeguard pupils.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised, including a selection from the previous school year.
- The inspector met with some parents informally at the beginning of the school day. The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, and Ofsted's survey for staff at the school.

Inspection team

Jean Thwaites, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the standard about the welfare, health and safety of pupils by ensuring that the arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school have regard to the most recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 6, 7 and 7(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the standard about the welfare, health and safety of pupils by taking such steps as are reasonably practical to ensure the effective implementation of the school's written health and safety policy, compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraphs 6, 11, 12 and 15).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the standard about the welfare, health and safety of pupils by drawing up a written risk assessment policy (paragraphs 6, 16 and 16(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the standard regarding the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors so that if a member of staff has lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks are made, as the proprietor considers appropriate, prior to appointment (paragraph 18(3)).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the standard regarding the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors so that the school's single central record (SCR) shows the required information referred to in the relevant sub-paragraphs (paragraphs 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b) and 21(4)).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the standard regarding the premises of and accommodation at schools so that they ensure the school premises, accommodation and facilities are maintained to a standard that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils is ensured and that cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such (paragraphs 25, 28 and 28(1)(c)).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the standard about the provision of information so that information regarding the school's proprietor and their address for correspondence both during term time and holidays and a telephone number is available (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(2), 32(2)(b) and 32(2)(b)(i)).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the standard about the provision of information so that particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, exclusions, particulars of the provision for pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans and for whom English is an additional language, a health and safety policy, the school's academic performance and any formal complaints (for the preceding year) and a copy of the school's most recent inspection report is readily available to parents (paragraphs 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f) and 32(3)(g)).
- The proprietor must ensure that they comply with the standard about the manner in which complaints are handled so that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively

implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils which clarifies the circumstances when confidentiality will be waived (paragraphs 33 and 33(k)).

- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibility at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to meet the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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