

Crown House School

Bassetsbury Manor, Bassetsbury Lane, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP11 1QX

Inspection dates

9–11 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and the proprietor have ensured that the school continues to provide a good standard of education. The independent school standards have been met.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Activities provided are challenging. They ensure that all pupils make strong progress from their starting points. Standards at the end of key stage 2 are above the national average.
- Pupils are well prepared for secondary education. Most gain entrance to local grammar schools.
- The early years provision is excellent. Children make exceptional progress from their starting points due to outstanding teaching. In 2017, almost all children reached a good level of development.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. The school's work to ensure pupils' welfare and safety is evident in all aspects of its work.
- Leaders and the proprietor have ensured that the curriculum is exciting. There are valuable learning experiences for pupils in all subjects. Extra-curricular provision is exceptional.
- Leadership of special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is not as effective as it could be due to limited up-to-date training.
- Middle leaders do not have enough impact on the areas for which they are responsible.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to reason and problem-solve in mathematics.

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?

- Develop the role of middle leaders to ensure that they are more accountable in the areas for which they are responsible.
- Improve training for leaders with responsibilities for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that they can fulfil their roles more effectively.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to problem-solve and reason in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor and headteacher have a clear vision for the school. They have high aspirations for pupils' outcomes and are very ambitious for the school.
- Almost all parents who answered the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, consider that the school is well led and managed. Nearly every parent would recommend the school to another parent. Parents praise the quality of teaching. Many said that school leaders are very supportive of their children. A typical comment was: 'Leaders are not just concerned about the running of the school, but really care about every child at Crown House.'
- Leaders are effective in ensuring that staff form a strong and cohesive team. All who completed the inspection questionnaire consider that the school has improved since the last inspection. A comment that reflected the views of staff was: 'The head has a superb vision for pupil achievement, welfare and happiness. They are supported by a deputy with so much drive and focus that they make a great team.'
- The curriculum provides effectively for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is an extensive range of subjects that provide a careful balance between academic, sporting and creative activities. For example, pupils in Year 4 developed their writing, historical and creative understanding when they wrote short stories and made samples of weaving inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry.
- The school provides an exceptionally large range of extra-curricular activities. These have a positive impact on pupils' development. In addition to an extensive sports programme, pupils can try pottery, ballet, drama and singing.
- British values are well promoted. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain because the school teaches pupils to respect diversity. The personal, social, health and economic programme ensures that pupils learn about democracy and the rule of law.
- The leadership of SEN is affected due to a lack of recent training. This has resulted in some confusion about which pupils have a special educational need and which need to catch up.
- The school has moved forward rapidly since the previous inspection. Senior leaders have led many initiatives that have improved the school. However, middle leaders are not yet fully held to account in the areas for which they are responsible.

Governance

- Governance is effective. Together with senior leaders, the proprietor has ensured that the independent school standards have been met. The proprietor has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas still to develop. He is well regarded by staff, pupils and parents alike.
- Minutes of meetings between the proprietor and senior leaders show that he holds them to account effectively. For example, attendance, which was an issue at the previous inspection, is rigorously monitored.
- The proprietor closely monitors all aspects related to pupils' safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders engage well with parents to create a safe culture in the school. All pupils spoken to said that they feel safe at the school. Parents who responded to Parent View consider that their children are safe at this school.
- Staff are well trained. They are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of a safeguarding concern. They know how to spot the signs and symptoms of abuse. All relevant checks that ensure that adults are suitable to work with children are in place.
- The school has a safeguarding policy that is published on its website. It is fully compliant with the government's current requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff go to great lengths to ensure that pupils feel valued. Each teacher is aware of the areas that pupils find easy or difficult to cope with. Staff have high expectations about what pupils can achieve. They provide work that is well matched to pupils' needs. In some classes, outstanding teaching has a significant impact on the amount of progress that pupils make.
- The school's assessment system enables staff to regularly track pupils' progress. Staff identify pupils who are at risk of underachieving. They quickly put in place effective strategies to improve pupils' progress. Parents are regularly informed about how well their children are doing.
- Teachers have good subject expertise, for example in science. Specialist teachers, in subjects such as music, enthuse pupils to develop their skills further. For example, some pupils go on to learn how to play the harp and other instruments.
- The good teaching helps pupils to deepen their understanding. One example of this was seen in a geography lesson in Year 6, where pupils avidly answered their teacher's questions and developed their understanding of wave formation.
- Reading is well taught. Pupils use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils read with fluency and expression. They make regular use of the school library, talking eloquently about which types of books they like reading and why they prefer particular authors.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across a range of subjects. Younger pupils learn how to improve their handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. Older pupils learn how to choose words carefully to convey subtlety of meaning. For example, Year 4 pupils used words carefully when writing persuasive adverts.
- In mathematics, pupils' books show evidence of pupils improving their skills in calculation. In some classes, such as Year 1, pupils apply their reasoning skills well. However, in other year groups there are fewer examples of pupils applying reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school succeeds in its aim of helping pupils to be happy and confident learners. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. On many occasions, parents, staff and pupils told inspectors that the school is like a large family.
- Staff miss no opportunity to help pupils develop a sense of self-belief in their abilities. Pupils are confident communicators. They have an excellent understanding about the skills needed to be a successful learner. For instance, they ask questions regularly to clarify their understanding.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for all pupils to develop their leadership skills. This is through roles such as house captains, monitors and school councillors. Pupils relish the opportunities provided by the school to take on additional responsibility. For example, during the inspection the head girl and head boy handed out certificates during assembly. Residential trips from Year 3 onwards help pupils to develop their independence.
- Pupils understand about the different forms of bullying. They say that bullying 'happens sometimes' but is extremely rare, and when it does happen 'we just tell the teachers and they sort it out'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- In lessons, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. This has a beneficial effect on the progress that they make. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning and strive to give their best. Work in pupils' books is well presented.
- Around the school, pupils are polite and courteous. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View consider that pupils are well behaved at this school. Pupils are effective in influencing the behaviour of others. For example, 'play ambassadors' perform a useful role in ensuring that playtimes are harmonious.
- School records show that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour. There have been no exclusions since the previous inspection.
- Levels of attendance are higher than the national average. This shows how much pupils relish the opportunity to come to school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter Year 1 with skills and abilities that are above those found nationally. During key stage 1, they continue to make strong progress. In 2017, pupils attained in line with the national average in reading and above the national average in writing and mathematics. School assessment information and work in pupils' books indicate that current pupils are making strong progress from their starting points.
- Phonics skills are well developed. Pupils build on the excellent start that they received in

early years. In 2017, pupils in Year 1 performed similarly to the national average in the phonics reading check. Current pupils are making rapid strides in developing their reading skills. They quickly become confident readers, and many have risen to the school's challenge of reading 100 books. Most pupils read at standards that are at or above those expected for their age.

- Pupils continue to make strong gains in their learning in key stage 2. They make particularly rapid progress in Year 5, where they are well prepared for the 11-plus examination and the next stage of their education. In 2017, by the end of Year 6, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard were well above the national average in all subjects. Current pupils are making strong progress in all their subjects.
- The most able pupils do well. In 2017, by the end of key stage 2, a higher proportion than average exceeded age-related expectations. Current pupils are provided with the right level of support and challenge to ensure that they make good progress.
- The few pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good gains in their learning. This is due to the effective support provided by their class teachers.
- In music, pupils make good progress in developing their performing and composing skills. They develop the skills to read musical notation confidently. Many play instruments, such as the guitar or piano. Singing is a strength of the school. During the inspection, inspectors heard some very melodic singing by the school choir, which was rehearsing for the upcoming performance of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat'.
- Sporting skills are well developed by specialist staff. The many different sporting activities promote pupils' physical fitness. Pupils are enthusiastic about the games that they play. They often win in sports competitions, such as football and netball.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The independent school standards relating to the early years are met.
- Children enter both the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. They make excellent progress due to the outstanding quality of teaching. In 2017, almost every child reached a good level of development by the end of Reception. These results were moderated by the local authority. Learning journals show that current children are continuing to make excellent progress. They are, therefore, very well prepared for their learning in Year 1. Literacy skills are exceptionally well developed. Most are able to read and write short sentences by the time that they leave early years.
- Parents are delighted with the provision. One expressed the views of many when they said: 'Class teachers are passionate about providing a fun and safe environment for pupils to learn and interact with others.' Parents come into school on a regular basis. They say that they appreciate the many opportunities provided for them to contribute to their children's learning. These include open-door mornings and 'show my learning' events. Some parents help by listening to children read. Parents enjoy sharing 'magic moments' about the progress that their children have made at home.
- Children blossom in the early years, and their behaviour and personal development are exemplary. They are confident enough to explain what they have been learning to the rest of the class. Children are encouraged to ask questions about any subject. For

example, during the inspection a child wanted to know if spiders grow new legs.

- Children are enthused by the exciting curriculum. In both the Nursery and Reception classes, teachers ensure that activities match children's interests. For example, children recently developed a fascination with fairies. Staff helped children to build 'fairy houses', and encouraged them to write to their 'fairy' pen pals.

School details

Unique reference number	110557
DfE registration number	825/6016
Inspection number	10047023

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Number of part-time pupils	13
Proprietor	Alpha Schools Ltd
Chair	Ali Khan
Headteacher	Ben Kenyon
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8667–£9792
Telephone number	01494 529 927
Website	crownhouseschool.co.uk
Email address	secretary@crownhouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–16 June 2016

Information about this school

- Crown House School is a non-selective preparatory day school for girls and boys between the ages of three and 11 years. Pupils are taught in eight single-aged classes from pre-school through to Year 6. Typically, there are about 20 pupils in each class.
- There are currently 13 part-time pupils who attend the Nursery. There is no provision for two-year-olds.
- The school premises occupy an old Jacobean building. The building has been renovated and extended to provide a large hall and early years provision. The school is registered for up to 160 pupils.

- The school aims for its pupils to be happy, safe and confident. The school's principle is that 'the individual matters'.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well below the national average. No pupils currently have an education, health and care plan.
- All pupils sit the 11-plus examination. In the most recent tests, 85% gained a place at a selective grammar school.
- The school was last inspected in June 2016, when its overall effectiveness was judged to require improvement.
- The school runs both a breakfast club and after-school provision.
- The school belongs to a small group of independent schools, known as Alpha Schools Limited. Up until 2014, the chair of directors was the headteacher of this school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in all classes. They talked to pupils about their work and looked in their books. There were meetings with pupils to ascertain their views of the school. Some pupils in Years 2 and 6 read to inspectors.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other staff. Discussions were held with the chair of Alpha Schools.
- In order to check compliance with the independent school standards, the inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including information on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- There were informal discussions with parents at the end of the school day. The views of 51 parents, who had responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered, together with one letter. Staff views were gathered through meetings and looking at the 10 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Rosemarie McCarthy

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018