

Inspection of Yorston Lodge School

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

Inspection dates: 19–21 November 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a welcoming and nurturing place. Teachers know pupils very well. Pupils, staff, parents and carers describe the school as 'like a family'. Staff give pupils lots of individual support and attention. This ensures that pupils achieve well in their learning.

The headteacher makes sure that reading lies at the heart of the school's curriculum. In all classes, staff share a wide range of novels and books with pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic readers. They read with good understanding.

Pupils enjoy school. They appreciate taking part in the wide range of clubs, such as gymnastics, netball and sewing. Pupils said that their residential trips, including skiing, are 'fun' and 'exciting'. These help pupils develop their resilience and independence.

Older pupils are proud of their leadership roles, including house captains and prefects. They are responsible and caring role models to younger pupils. Pupils contribute to the local community, for example, by visiting the elderly at the local 'Thursday Club'.

Pupils are extremely polite and well behaved. They told us that bullying happens very rarely. They are confident that, should it happen, it will be dealt with quickly by teachers. Pupils know that staff care about them and help them with any concerns.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Teachers provide a broad and enriched curriculum. Across different subjects, staff plan visits to deepen pupils' understanding. For example, in history, Year 3 pupils visit Chester as part of their topic about the Romans. In Year 5, pupils enjoy a residential field trip to enhance their geography learning. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about these trips and about the learning that they remembered.

Pupils leave the school as confident learners who achieve well. Regular and detailed homework helps them adjust to the rigours of secondary school. Parents and pupils told us how effectively the school prepares pupils for their next stage of education. Pupils are successful in entrance examinations to high schools.

Teachers plan lessons which develop pupils' skills and knowledge. They ensure that pupils understand new vocabulary. For example, in a Year 3 science lesson pupils learned about forces. The teacher checked pupils' understanding of new and unfamiliar words and concepts. In art and design, pupils produce high-quality art work. However, pupils' learning is not equally strong across the curriculum. For example, in geography the activities which teachers plan do not consistently support pupils in developing their skills over time. Pupils' mapping skills do not build across year groups.

Pupils make strong progress in mathematics. They develop confidence and skill in their work. Staff make sure that pupils have lots of practise learning key facts, including multiplication tables. A consistent approach to teaching mathematics has been established by the headteacher. In the early years, children use a range of resources to help them develop their understanding of number and counting. During our visit, children in Reception were matching numbers to stars. The shop role play area helps children recognise and count coins.

In all classes, pupils read very regularly. Reading areas are well resourced and inviting. Older pupils value quiet reading time. Younger pupils develop as confident readers. They benefit from daily individual reading time with adults in school and at home. Pupils start key stage 2 reading fluently. However, for younger pupils struggling to read, reading books are sometimes too difficult for them to practise their phonics skills. The approaches that staff use to teach phonics are not consistent. This is because staff have not had recent training in delivering phonics.

In the early years, children settle quickly. There are enough adults to care for them. This means that children have lots of individual attention. Adults work closely with children and support them well in their learning. Staff strongly promote children's communication and language skills, helping children understand new vocabulary. Children develop confidence. During our visit, Reception children enthusiastically took part in a whole-school singing lesson, following instructions and singing in tune. Children have limited opportunities to learn independently, especially in the outdoor classroom area.

Pupils behave well. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and follow instructions. Pupils move very calmly and sensibly around the school. They are polite and friendly to visitors.

The headteacher places a high priority on staff well-being. Staff enjoy working together, sharing ideas and planning. Staff have some opportunities to develop their skills, for example by meeting with teachers from other schools. However, most staff have not attended recent professional training to enhance their teaching in subjects, including geography.

Leaders, including the proprietor, make sure that the school meets the independent school standards and other requirements. The curriculum develops pupils' understanding of British values and respect for those with different faiths. Although the school has not identified that any pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the school, teachers are skilled at making sure that pupils of different abilities learn well. At the start of the inspection, a small number of updated policies, including those relating to safeguarding and equality, were not published on the school's website. The headteacher ensured that prompt action was taken to rectify this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have regular safeguarding training. Staff know pupils very well. They know how to check for signs that a pupil may be at risk. Leaders check the staff recruited to work in school to ensure that they pose no threat to pupils.

Staff teach pupils about the risks they might face in their everyday lives. Through the curriculum and working with other professionals, pupils learn how to stay safe when using technology. Pupils know that they should speak to an adult in school if they are concerned about anything. Pupils feel safe in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- By the end of key stage 1, pupils develop as confident and fluent readers. Teachers make sure that pupils develop their phonics skills by reading daily with adults. However, reading books for younger pupils who are struggling to read are sometimes too difficult for them to practise their decoding skills. Staff need to make sure that reading books are closely matched to pupils' phonics ability. The scheme for teaching phonics is not consistent across classes. Leaders need to ensure a consistency of approach.
- Across different subjects, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding. However, work is not consistently high quality across all subjects, for example geography. Leaders need to ensure that in all subjects teachers plan activities which consistently build on pupils' prior learning, helping them to know more and remember more. Leaders need to ensure that staff keep their teaching skills up to date in subjects across the curriculum.
- In the Nursery and Reception Years, children make good progress. However, staff need to develop children's independent learning more. Staff should plan plenty of opportunities for children to play and explore, be active in their learning and be creative and independent, including in the outdoor area.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	111479
DfE registration number	895/6013
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10112062
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	73
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	Montague Place Limited
Chair	Mark Peters
Headteacher	Janet Dallimore
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,580
Telephone number	01565 633177
Website	www.yorstonlodge.com
Email address	headmistress@yorstonlodge.com
Date of previous inspection	15–17 February 2017

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection took place on 15–17 February 2017

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations

2014.

- We met with the headteacher.
- Art and design, science, mathematics and reading were considered as part of this inspection. Inspection activities included discussions with leaders, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils about their learning. In reading, we also observed a member of staff listening to pupils read. We met with pupils and scrutinised pupils' work in history and geography.
- A tour was made of the school.
- We had a telephone conversation with the chair.
- We checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. We met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in school.
- We met with parents at the start of the school day to seek their views. We also considered 31 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including free-text responses.
- We considered 14 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and 11 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.
- During the inspection, we met with groups of pupils and observed lunchtime.
- We examined a range of documents. These included, the school's policies, attendance analysis and schemes of work.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tina Cleugh

Ofsted Inspector

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