

Inspection of Silverhill School

Swan Lane, Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1RL

Inspection dates:

4–6 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils understand the boundaries that are set and are respectful of these. However, as much as pupils' dispositions are a strength, too many routines rely upon these alone. Adults are too dependent on pupils' decision-making when it comes to keeping everyone safe. Leaders are too dismissive of statutory requirements to safeguard pupils and place too much emphasis on trust alone.

Pupils hold staff in high regard. Pupils particularly enjoy subjects like physical education and art. However, in some subjects, they do not build on their learning in a coherent, well-planned way. Where the curriculum is planned well, pupils are willing to have a go and offer answers to questions. They are enthusiastic learners and happily tackle what is asked. Where the curriculum is less effective and when pupils find things difficult, pupils sit and wait, not having the resilience to tackle things that they initially find difficult.

Pupils are polite and considerate towards one another. They independently resolve occasional day-to-day friendship quarrels. Pupils are proud that they can sort out difficulties for themselves. If needed, they know that adults will provide a listening ear. Everyone is in full agreement that this is a school that is free from bullying.

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

Leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards (ISS) are consistently met. The proprietors are not well informed about the requirements that need to be consistently in place. Furthermore, those responsible have not read the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State, including the publication 'Keeping children safe in education'.

The proprietor has not ensured that standards relating to welfare, health and safety and premises are met fully. Leaders do not follow the school's health and safety procedures rigorously enough. There is a notable difference between policy and practice, including in the early years. For instance, the school's asbestos register has not been shared with employees. The building is poorly maintained. Pupils say that the toilets are of 'bad quality'. Some classrooms have poor lighting or lighting that does not work. Ceilings in some parts of the building show extensive signs of water damage. A fire alarm point is not in working order due to water damage. Furthermore, the external fabric of the building appears unsafe. In recent times, falling masonry has caused some parents and carers to rightly become concerned about their children's safety. When such issues arise, leaders are too slow to address the dangers posed to pupils and staff. The site is not safely maintained.

Leaders do not maintain a sharp enough eye on fire risk management. There is a divide between what is noted in policy and what happens on the ground. For instance, some fire doors are difficult to open, and the evacuation route is not sensibly demarcated. Leaders do not ensure that all relevant risk assessments, such as fire risk assessments, are followed. This means that leaders cannot ensure that

the premises are maintained properly to ensure that pupils are safe as far as could reasonably be expected. Leaders have not ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders have not published an accessibility plan as is required.

The processes for recruiting staff are poor. At the time of the inspection, some adults who work at the school did not have any recruitment checks in place. When checks have occurred, leaders do not record these on a single central record, as is required. The proprietors' knowledge and oversight of this aspect is poor. As a result, some of the welfare requirements of the early years are also unmet

Pupils study a full range of subjects. The school broadly follows the national curriculum, linking some subjects through a cross-curricular theme. However, the national curriculum is used more as a checklist than as the basis of a well-constructed and deliberately planned curriculum. The rationale behind the school's curriculum sequence is not fully crystallised. This means that pupils do not always build securely on what has gone before.

Teachers show a lack of incisive knowledge about how the curriculum should build pupils' knowledge incrementally. In some year groups and subjects, pupils cannot see where and how they have made errors. Teachers do not routinely pick up pupils' misconceptions and plan to remedy these in the short term or consolidate in the longer term, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders have implemented a phonics programme for the teaching of early reading. Consequently, early reading skills are taught progressively. However, the process of matching pupils' reading books to the sounds that they learn is a work in progress. Nevertheless, pupils are encouraged to read often. Children's language skills are promoted strongly in the early years. Sharing storybooks is commonplace and children enjoy this time with adults. However, opportunities to listen to stories are less prevalent in other year groups. Older pupils say that the selection of fiction books on offer at the school is too narrow.

The leadership of the early years is effective. Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage. Staff have received useful training and are clear on where the priorities lie. For instance, the mathematics curriculum has been developed to include a stronger emphasis on sequencing, patterns and measuring and weighing. However, further work is needed across the school to ensure that this is the foundation from which subsequent learning can build.

Pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are cordial and good natured. Pupils, including children in the early years, listen well to their teachers. They have a well-developed understanding of social skills. Pupils try their best and are respectful to adults. Learning activities flow free from disruption.

Some aspects of pupils' personal development and growth are promoted strongly. Many pupils are proud that they have attended this school for 'all of our lives'. They enjoy many aspects of schooling and have a strong sense of how to lead healthy lifestyles. For instance, pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and exercising regularly. However, they are less secure on how to protect themselves from someone who may try to influence them. There are clear gaps in older pupils' understanding of age-appropriate issues that are important on the eve of transition to secondary school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The proprietors have not read the latest statutory safeguarding guidance. Neither is there a record that staff have read it. Some staff, such as the school's deputy designated safeguarding lead, do not hold the level of training required.

Staff recruitment procedures are not secure. The proprietor does not understand the appropriate level of checks required for each member of staff, including those who work in the early years. Consequently, some staff have not been checked for their suitability to work with children. This is unsafe. Furthermore, leaders do not maintain a single central record of safer recruitment information.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The proprietors do not carry out their role effectively. Leaders do not demonstrate the skills needed to lead a safe school for adults or pupils. The proprietor should ensure that the school is well led and managed. They must ensure that the school consistently meets all of the independent school standards.
- Leaders do not understand or fulfil their legal duties regarding safeguarding. They should manage all aspects of safeguarding effectively by ensuring that:
 - adults are vetted appropriately before taking up employment or work at the school
 - staff receive sufficient training to carry out their roles effectively
 - staff read and understand part 1 of statutory safeguarding guidance
 - those responsible establish and maintain a single central record of recruitment information
 - pupils' knowledge of how to keep themselves safe broadens so that they develop a fuller awareness of age-appropriate issues.
- The proprietor must take immediate action to address the unmet independent school standards relating to welfare, health and safety and premises. The proprietor must ensure that:

- they strengthen and effectively implement written risk assessments in respect of managing risks on site
 - they share crucial information with staff, such as that contained in the school’s asbestos register
 - the school is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order 2005), by commissioning an updated fire risk assessment and developing a coherent fire risk management strategy
 - the site is maintained safely, such as addressing lighting faults in classroom areas and the exterior weather damage to the building.
- Leaders have not thought enough about how content in some subjects is sequenced when planning the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that concepts taught in one key stage prepare pupils, including those with SEND, well for new learning in later key stages.
 - Teachers do not routinely check and rectify pupils’ misconceptions. Assessment information is not used incisively to inform teachers’ planning and pupils’ next steps. This is particularly the case for pupils who need additional support and who need additional challenge. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is taught well so that pupils achieve their full potential.
 - Pupils say that the range of fiction books is too narrow. Staff are just beginning to match pupils’ reading materials to the sounds that they are learning. Now, leaders need to ensure that resources to support reading complement and enhance pupils’ learning.

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 are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	109355
DfE registration number	803/6002
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10090661
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	199
Number of part-time pupils	34
Proprietor	Careernature Ltd
Chair	Julian Capper
Headteacher	Jenifer Capper
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,470 to £9,585
Telephone number	01454 772156
Website	www.silverhillschool.co.uk
Email address	head@silverhillschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–25 November 2016

Information about this school

- Silverhill is an independent school in South Gloucestershire. The school was founded in 1947 and moved to its current site in 1992.
- The school was last inspected in November 2016.
- Careernature Ltd has two proprietors, who also have responsibility for the governance of the school. One proprietor also acts as the headteacher and the other as the school bursar.
- In the early years provision, the Nursery offers places to children from the age of two. They are taught in two classes, with some children attending on a part-time basis.
- The school was not using any alternative provision at the time of this inspection.

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other staff who hold significant responsibilities and some teaching staff who were present during the inspection.
- A meeting was held with the proprietors.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils about their work and discussed the school's approach to curriculum delivery with teaching staff.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements were reviewed. Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead, scrutinised the school's recruitment checks and talked to pupils about safety. The inspection team also considered how well adults in the school act on emerging concerns about pupils' welfare.
- Inspectors observed pupils during the school day including at lunchtime and playtimes.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised that included: the admissions register, health and safety documentation and pupils' attendance records.
- Two meetings were held with pupils to discuss their views about the school. Inspectors also talked to pupils informally about the school.

- We took account of the 43 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, and 28 additional free-text responses.
- We considered the views of 34 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Farr, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sarah McGinnis

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) 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
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 18(2)(a) no such person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act;
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
 - 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person-
 - 18(2)(c)(i) the person's identity;

- 18(2)(c)(ii) the person's medical fitness;
 - 18(2)(c)(iii) the person's right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - 18(2)(c)(iv) where appropriate, the person's qualifications;
 - 18(2)(d) the proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person's appointment;
 - 18(2)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
 - 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
 - 21(2) The register referred to in sub-paragraph (1) may be kept in electronic form, provided that the information so recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form.
 - 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether-
 - 21(3)(a)(i) S's identity was checked;
 - 21(3)(a)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
 - 21(3)(a)(iv) checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications;
 - 21(3)(a)(v) an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S;

- 21(3)(a)(vi) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d);
 - 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
 - 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
 - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.
- 21(4) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to each member of staff in post on 1st August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1st May 2007, whether each check referred to in sub-paragraph (3) was made and whether an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained, together with the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained.
 - 21(7) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor in post on 1st August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1st May 2007-
 - 21(7)(a) whether each check referred to in sub-paragraph (6) was made; and
 - 21(7)(b) whether an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained, together with the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 27(a) the lighting in each room or other internal space is suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein;

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and

- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

Early years foundation stage

- The proprietor has not ensured that the school meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the statutory framework of the early years foundation stage. This is because the same safeguarding and welfare failings that are present in the school are also present in the early years. The relevant paragraphs from the statutory framework are 3.54, 3.55, 3.64, 3.7, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12 and 3.13.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has not ensured that the school has an accessibility plan in place.

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