

Inspection of The Treehouse School

37 Wallingford Road, Cholsey, Oxfordshire OX10 9LG

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Treehouse is one big family among everyone. Here, you will find happy pupils and nurturing staff. Parents give unequivocal praise about how their children thrive. Pupils learn an interesting curriculum which prioritises first-hand experiences. Pupils are motivated and highly enthusiastic. They are encouraged to think, problem-solve and develop independence in making choices.

Pupils' behaviour is flawless. They interact and work well together. Bullying has no place as everyone is valued and included. Pupils describe feeling safe and well-supported.

Regular fitness, learning to eat well and keeping hydrated mean pupils stay healthy. Every day, pupils and staff come together for 'family lunch'. Without exception, everyone eats the freshly prepared and nutritious food. Leaders' commitment to pupils being 'body smart' is impressive. Year 6 pupils proudly explain how they enjoy running long distances of up to 10K. In addition, leaders immerse pupils in the natural world. Pupils are therefore passionate about a sustainable future.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Straightaway, pupils learn they must always give their best. Treehouse is a supportive environment without compromising on its high standards. Leaders aim for pupils to have the 'toolkit' they need to succeed at secondary school.

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

Pupils receive a well-rounded education. Leaders have created a holistic and bespoke curriculum. Informed by the aims of the national curriculum, pupils learn through broad areas that capitalise on pupils' interests. Leaders have identified the curriculum end points pupils need to reach. Furthermore, leaders' curriculum thinking has responded well to the COVID-19 pandemic. For that reason, they have adapted topics to address pupils' missed learning. However, their planning has not considered all the knowledge that needs to build sequentially in order to ensure pupils meet the ambition leaders have for them.

Reading is cherished and pupils read a wide range of books. Teachers read aloud daily to a captive pupil audience. Pupils eagerly await what will happen next in the story. They also have opportunities to develop their skills in drama. Pupils leave school as fluent and avid readers.

For the youngest pupils, they learn to read using a highly effective phonics programme. Books closely match to the sounds pupils know. However, leaders have not kept staff's teaching knowledge up to date since the initial phonics training. This means implementation is not as effective as it could be. The pandemic has impacted on some younger pupils' reading fluency. To address this, leaders are providing these pupils with intensive one-to-one reading practice.

Leaders utilise staff's subject expertise in physical education and music. Staff expertly present new material in small steps and ensure pupils practise at each stage. Pupils build successfully on prior knowledge and show great skill. But this is not the case in all subjects because teachers do not always set the right work to strengthen pupils' knowledge. This hinders pupils achieving as well as they could.

Pupils benefit from instant feedback on their learning because of the number of staff available to support them. Teachers' probing questions enable pupils to think at a deeper level. Precise feedback helps pupils overcome any misconceptions. Beyond this, leaders have not yet considered other ways to get assurances that pupils remember important knowledge over longer periods of time.

Outdoor learning is embraced by pupils. Teachers think carefully how to use the natural environment to teach pupils concepts and ideas. Every Friday is forest school. Leaders make wonderful use of the local area to teach the planned curriculum through a child-centred approach. Pupils apply what they have learned to real life contexts. Pupils access the woodland in all weathers and their personal development is strongly enhanced.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND). They seek to remove any perceived barriers so that pupils can access the full curriculum. Pupils' needs are well met. Staff ensure pupils with SEND have repeated practice to secure knowledge. Staff are alert to possible emerging needs and work in partnership with parents. The 'focus child' meetings between staff and parents complement this excellent work. The school's accessibility plan fulfils the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act.

Impeccable behaviour is embodied by every pupil when learning. From the youngest to the oldest, pupils' relationships with each other are exceptional in lessons. They show remarkable concentration when in 'choice and challenge' time. Through this, pupils work excitedly on their independent projects under the guidance of the teachers.

Pupils debate in a mature way. They are knowledgeable about current affairs and show respect to other points of view. Pupils also develop a strong sense of personal responsibility. Roles such as chairing whole-school meetings and voting for suggested improvements to the school contribute well to their understanding of democracy.

Trustees have been instrumental in making this a good school. Each trustee brings their own set of skills and collectively they hold leaders strongly to account. Trustees have supported school leaders in meeting all the independent school standards. They test out what leaders tell them through seeing the impact for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and trustees have transformed the safeguarding culture since the last inspection. They brought about key changes, including accessing training from the local authority. Designated safeguarding leads now have a clear understanding of their statutory responsibilities. Staff and volunteers raise concerns quickly. Leaders understand when they may need to seek advice from other agencies. Leaders' record-keeping documents all conversations and observations. There is a clear chronology of the actions leaders take to keep pupils safe.

The right checks are carried out on any adult who may come into the school. Trustees' oversight of safeguarding is robust. The safeguarding policy follows the latest government guidelines and is available on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified all the steps of knowledge. Although staff are clear on the curriculum end points, there remains some ambiguity regarding what content should come first and then next. Leaders need to continue with their curriculum review to map out all the component knowledge within a subject.
- Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge is not consistently strong across the curriculum. Often, implementation is highly effective. However, there are times where staff lack the necessary knowledge to deliver all aspects of the curriculum well. Leaders need to ensure that staff are fully trained to know how best to teach what is planned.
- While teachers' use of formative assessment is a strength, leaders miss opportunities to use summative assessment to assure themselves that pupils are learning as well as could. Leaders need to ensure appropriate checks are made to ensure pupils have secured the ambitious end points of the school's curriculum.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

School details

Unique reference number	138873
DfE registration number	931/6011
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10232319
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Treehouse Trust
Chair	Charlie Clare
Headteacher	Andrea Turner (director)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£0
Telephone number	01491 652 000
Website	www.thetreehouseschool.org.uk
Email address	office@thetreehouseschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 to 16 May 2019

Information about this school

- The Treehouse School is a non-fee-paying primary school catering for pupils in Years 1 to 6 from the local area. It is a registered charity and relies solely on fundraising, grants and sponsorship to keep it running. Some pupils at the school were previously home educated. Pupils are taught in mixed-aged groups.
- The board of trustees is the proprietor body. Most trustees are new since the last standard inspection in 2019.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with three trustees, including the chair.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives into these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. To do this, they met with senior leaders, looked at curriculum plans, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Pupils across the school were observed reading to a familiar adult by the lead inspector.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to examine records and actions. This included sampling a range of safeguarding documentation. He reviewed checks on the safer recruitment of adults.
- Inspectors talked to pupils of different ages about their learning and experiences at school.
- The views of staff, pupils and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors looked at the school site and scrutinised a wide range of documentary evidence to check on the statutory requirements of the independent school standards.

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Sackett

His Majesty's Inspector

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