

# The White House School

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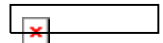
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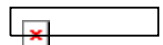
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**Introduction and summary**

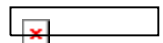


**Purpose and scope of the inspection**



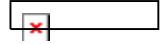
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

**Information about the school**



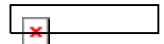
The White House School is a day school for pupils between three and eleven years of age. It was founded in 1945 and is situated near to the centre of Whitchurch. It is non-selective and is not affiliated to any specific religious faith. There are 76 boys and 100 girls on roll, 33 of whom are below compulsory school age. The pupils are divided into eight classes according to their age; some pupils below compulsory school age attend on a part-time basis until they are ready for a whole week in school.

## Summary of main findings



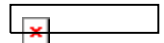
The White House is a good school. The teaching is good and helps the pupils to make good progress. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed very well and this helps them to become responsible individuals. They behave very well, show high levels of courtesy; play together harmoniously and treat each other with respect. They are keen to come to school and enjoy the wide range of learning opportunities provided. There are good procedures to safeguard pupils' welfare and to provide parents with the information they require. Parents are rightly pleased with what is offered by the school. Despite this positive picture, the school does not meet all of the requirements for registration.

## What the school does well



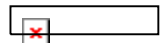
- it provides good teaching, which enables the pupils to make good progress;
- its staff are deployed well to make the most of their expertise;
- it promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development very effectively;
- it promotes very good behaviour and a high standard of courtesy;
- it provides a broad and rich curriculum enriched with a wide range of clubs and other activities; and
- it secures strong support from parents and has good links within the local community.

## What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations



- improve the precision of assessment as identified in section 1 of this report;
- extend the checks made on staff prior to appointment, as set out in section 4;
- improve the medical room as indicated in section 5; and
- provide further information to parents as identified in section 6.

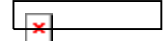
## What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002



In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

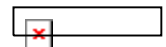
## Next steps



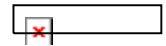
Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- extend the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) to develop pupils' skills and understanding across the curriculum; and
- improve the quality of pupils' handwriting, by further emphasis on its teaching.

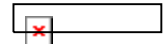
## Compliance with the regulations for registration



### 1. The quality of education provided by the school



#### The quality of the curriculum



The curriculum is of good quality. The school has an appropriate set of aims relating to the curriculum and it is successful in fulfilling them. It provides a broad and rich curriculum which includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum; within this there is a suitable emphasis on English and mathematics. The curriculum is extended by the inclusion of religious education and personal, health and social education (PSHE) for all pupils, and French for the pupils from Year 2 onwards. Sex education is taught appropriately through science and PHSE. Citizenship is included in the PSHE programme, with very effective opportunities for the pupils to learn about personal safety and social responsibility.

The curriculum is enriched by an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and clubs, which represent a wide range of interests, including sports, academic subjects and cultural pursuits. These are taught well. They are well attended and enjoyed by the pupils. Visits to the local area and further afield make a strong contribution to the richness of the curriculum. For example, the visit to Carding Mill Valley helped the pupils to develop their understanding in a range of subjects including geography, history, science, mathematics and English.

The curriculum is mostly designed through discrete subjects. These have clearly written curriculum policies linked to sequential schemes of work which set out the work to be covered each year. Although there is a clear policy for the teaching of English, there is no agreed policy for handwriting and there are some inconsistencies in the way that this is taught. Additionally, there is not enough emphasis within the curriculum on the teaching of handwriting, and so the pupils do not learn to present their work well enough or use a cursive script early enough.

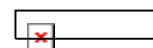
Planning incorporates some very effective cross-curricular elements which help the pupils to make links between different subjects. For example, a geography lesson reinforced reference and research skills, and a history lesson helped to improve the pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Although this aspect is strong in relation to literacy and numeracy, ICT is insufficiently used as a teaching and learning tool across the curriculum.

The subject matter within the curriculum is matched to the ages and aptitudes of pupils. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is carefully devised to put suitable emphasis on providing these pupils with appropriate tasks so that they experience success. The curriculum provides for all pupils to learn and make progress and is a good preparation for the next phase in their schooling and for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

All pupils, apart from a small number in the Foundation Stage, receive full-time education. The curriculum for the pupils in the kindergarten and the reception class follows the recommended national guidance. This includes a range of suitable activities which help them to make good progress towards the early learning goals. More information on the education provided within the Foundation Stage can be found in a separate inspection report which is available at the school or via the Ofsted website at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

### The quality of the teaching and assessment



The teaching is good and has some very effective features. The pupils make good progress through the school, they enjoy coming to school and rise to the challenges that await them each day. Discussion with the pupils revealed that they were pleased with the progress that they had made. Parents too are pleased with the progress that their children make and they are justified in their view that the teaching is good. None of the lessons observed were less than satisfactory and almost all were taught well. A particularly effective feature of the teaching is the opportunity for staff to use their specialist skills. This draws on their excellent subject knowledge and contributes to the rapid progress that pupils make in these lessons. For example, in a physical education lesson the pupils made significant progress in their understanding of rhythm and coordination, and in a science lesson the pupils extended their use of scientific terminology and rapidly improved their understanding of habitats.

All the staff know the pupils very well and relationships at all levels are very positive. All pupils contribute in lessons, enjoy their learning and have fun. The teachers are skilled in including the less confident pupils so that they too can contribute. Such pupils are encouraged to offer their ideas and opinions and the sensitive approach by staff helps them to learn and make good progress. The pupils who have special educational needs are included well in lessons and their individual education programmes set out clear and appropriate targets for them to achieve. Their personal confidence and self-esteem are very well promoted in lessons and they are given the opportunity to succeed. Support staff are deployed very effectively to help these pupils learn.

The staff prepare resources efficiently and use them well to explain the key ideas in the lessons. Some very simple resources were used to excellent effect during the inspection. For example, a bucket and small cup were used to compare the amount of salt water and fresh water on Earth; this was highly effective in helping the pupils to understand this relationship and the need to conserve water supplies.

Lesson planning is satisfactory. The staff are clear about what is to be taught in each lesson and how it will build on what has gone before. Some of the teachers modify their plans to take account of previous learning and this shows that they have a good understanding of what their pupils have learned in each lesson. Learning objectives give lessons a sharp focus and when these are shared with the pupils it helps them to understand more about their own learning and begin to evaluate it. The teachers encourage the pupils to think hard about what they could do to improve their work and this helps the pupils to reflect on their efforts. They are given suitable praise for good achievement in their work or conduct and this encourages them to try hard. Whereas most of them endeavour to

present their work well, their handwriting is not as good as it should be.

The staff mark books regularly and diligently, and the best marking contains helpful comments so that the pupils know what they need to do next to improve their work. Questioning is used well to assess understanding and in the best lessons the teachers used questioning very skilfully to add extra challenges for the higher attaining pupils. The school uses a range of tests, including National Curriculum tests, to assess pupils' attainment and these also give a useful indication of progress. Information from the range of tests shows that most of the pupils make good progress, with particularly good progress in reading. However, analysis of the Key Stage 1 writing and spelling tests revealed that they were not marked with sufficient precision. The school does not yet have a robust enough system to ensure that these tests are marked with sufficient rigour.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

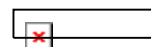
The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that the school has in place a framework by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or, by national norms(paragraph 1(4)).

## **2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**



Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school is a happy, secure community where the pupils feel valued. The pupils themselves said that they felt happy in school; they put their trust in their teachers, who, in turn, value them as individuals and welcome the contributions that they make. The staff are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and treat them fairly. They offer them very good role models of courtesy and this helps to promote good manners. This is a significant feature of the education that is provided at The White House; all the pupils are taught the value of courtesy and even the youngest treat each other politely and with respect.

Emphasis is placed both on individual and collective responsibility and this contributes very well to citizenship. There are ample opportunities for pupils to learn to accept responsibility and to appreciate how one's behaviour can affect others. The curriculum contains suitable emphasis on social education and so the pupils learn to respect each other, work cooperatively, and care for their equipment. They are also taught to conserve energy and to be aware of their responsibilities to the environment. The pupils enjoy their responsibilities, take them seriously and carry them out well.

There is a strong moral code in the school which emphasises the difference between right and wrong. The pupils think that the rules are fair and abide by them. They behave very well and the school operates as a very orderly community. There were no incidents of harassment during the inspection and the pupils are clear about what they should do should such an incident occur. There are appropriate opportunities through the house system, competitions, and sport to enable the pupils to develop friendly rivalry and do of their best.

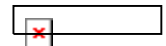
The school has strong links with the local community and this helps the pupils to understand more about public life. Visits within the locality and further afield help them to learn about their locality and the people who work in it. The curriculum helps pupils to appreciate their own and other cultures and promotes respect and harmony. Assemblies make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development and there are sufficient opportunities for them to reflect on their experiences and

feelings at other times of the day. A particularly good feature of the school is that it helps the pupils to see the value of what they have, and to appreciate it. They raise considerable amounts of money for charities through efforts organised by the school and from suggestions that they make themselves.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**



The school takes very seriously its duties in relation to the pupils' welfare, health and safety and the provision is good. A range of appropriate policies are in place and these are effectively implemented including the promotion of good behaviour, anti-bullying, child protection, safety on school visits, First Aid and fire protection. These policies are contained within the staff handbook and are also separately available for any parents who wish to see them.

The school is proactive in ensuring that the pupils themselves are aware of health and safety and it involves them appropriately. The anti-bullying policy includes the provision of a 'Bully Box' in the entrance hall where pupils can put written notes if they feel they cannot speak about their problem. The 'Playground Friend' scheme is also an effective part of the anti-bullying policy; in addition to promoting harmonious recreation periods. Older pupils are charged with suitable responsibilities to look out for the welfare of the younger ones in the school.

Appropriate risk assessments are carried out for all educational visits out of school. Admission and attendance records are well maintained. The school keeps very detailed records on individual pupils with regard to their welfare, health and safety. First Aid is well provided for and meets regulations. First Aid boxes are strategically placed around the school and are always available for staff on playground duty and when on educational visits. Great care is taken to ensure the routine compliance with the school's comprehensive policies and the accurate and dutiful recording of events.

The school has a policy on disability which fulfils most of its duties under the terms of the DDA. However, the three-year action plan, which is a requirement of the Act, is only at the early stage of development and is currently insufficiently detailed to fulfil requirements.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

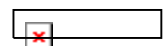
Yes.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the DDA?***

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

**4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**



All staff and other adults who have access to pupils have been given official clearance to check for their suitability for work with children. The school keeps a comprehensive record of this.

The personnel procedures concerned with staff appointments confirm the identity and previous employment history of prospective employees. References are taken up appropriately. However, the medical fitness of the person to be employed and the verification of any qualifications are not checked, which is a requirement for registration.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

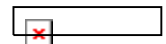
No.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that, prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, appropriate checks are carried out to confirm their medical fitness and, where appropriate, qualifications, and that such information has been taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

**5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**



The premises and accommodation are very good and are suitable for their purpose. The school is accommodated on a single site within a redesigned telephone exchange building, which stands near to a main road. Although the space available for parking is restricted there are adequate safety arrangements in place during busy times of day.

The building, which was originally erected in 1936, is solid and substantial and arranged over three floors. It is well maintained and is in a very good decorative state. Classrooms are reasonably well furnished, clean, warm, bright and airy, and all areas of the school have been made attractive with the display of pupils' work and other pictorial materials of interest. Classrooms are tidy and well organised.

A very good learning environment has been created including specialist areas such as those for art, music and ICT. On the top floor of the building, there is a very large hall which doubles as a gymnasium. This is used very well throughout the day. The entrance hall to the side of the school building provides a good space for meetings and is also used for small, overspill teaching groups on occasions. Notice boards, with very useful information for both pupils and parents, are available in this space. The staff room is on the small side and periodically has to double as a medical room when pupils are unwell. The pupils are made comfortable, but there is no sink in the room itself, which does not meet regulations.

Outside there is adequate hard-play space, but no grassed area. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed their wish for more opportunities for field sports and for pupils to have access to a grassed area for playtimes. Pupils have access to the playing fields of a nearby maintained secondary school, including an astro-turf pitch, and to a rugby pitch at a local club. Pupils also make use of the local swimming centre on a weekly basis.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***



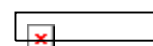
The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

**6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**



The school provides a high level of good quality information for parents. This information is made available to parents through various channels, such as newsletters, magazines, reports, displays, and meetings with staff. The staff have frequent informal contacts with parents and these opportunities promote good communication on a regular basis; parents welcome these opportunities.

The parents are invited to discuss their children's progress more formally twice a year and are given informative reports summarising the progress that their children have made in all the subjects studied. These reports are satisfactory; they identify clearly the progress that the pupils have made in addition to the topics that have been studied. Homework diaries for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 are a useful supplement to the information that parents receive about their children's progress. The overwhelming majority of parents consider that the school keeps them well informed and is approachable if they have a problem or concern.

A wide range of the school's policies is available to parents on request, although, in practice, much of the information that they contain is given verbally before the pupils start at the school. The school has an attractive prospectus that sets out a range of useful information for current and prospective parents. It is updated periodically and is due for revision. The complaints policy is summarised in the prospectus and is fully available to parents on request. However, it does not give any information about the number of complaints made through this procedure.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

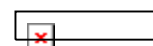
The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- provide to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j)).

**7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**



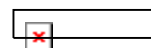
The school has good relationships with parents and complaints are rare. The procedure for

complaints is clear and appropriately available to parents.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**School details**



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Name of school:	The White House School		
DfES ref number:	893/6013		
Type of school:	Primary		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 74,	Girls 95,	Total 169
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 2,	Girls 5,	Total 7
Annual fees (day pupils):	£1,740 - £2,550		
Address of school:	Heath Road Whitchurch Shropshire SY13 2AA		
E-mail address:	whitehouseschool@btconnect.com		
Telephone number:	01948 662730		
Fax number:	01948 662730		
Headteacher:	Mrs Helen M Clarke		
Proprietor:	Mrs Helen M Clarke		
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Mary E Hamby HMI		
Dates of inspection:	31 January - 3 February 2005		

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