

Woodhill Preparatory School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	850/6014
Unique Reference Number	116540
Inspection number	298231
Inspection dates	13-14 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Inspection of funded nursery education was carried out under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school. The nursery inspection was carried out under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Information about the school

Woodhill is an independent mixed primary day school for boys and girls aged 3 to 11 years. It is based on two sites at Chandlers Ford and Botley. The establishments run as parallel schools and have pupils of the full age range. Both schools are situated in the proximity of well established residential areas although the Botley site has more extensive grounds, including a meadow. There are 192 pupils on roll, 62 of whom are funded under the Nursery Scheme. There is funded nursery provision at both sites. The provision for funded pupils was inspected separately and is reported at the end of this report.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and there are a number of strengths especially in the provision that enables pupils to develop into confident young people by the time they leave. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in some key areas of learning. The school is successful in enabling pupils to pass the required examinations in order to go on to schools of their choice. Parents are mostly very positive about the school, confirming that their children enjoy attending. This view is supported by the pupils' own comments. The school does not yet meet all the necessary requirements in some areas of its procedures and policies. Aspects of provision for welfare, health and safety are inadequate. The school has already taken immediate steps to rectify some issues.

Quality of education

The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. It has good breadth and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum with the addition of French and drama. Opportunities for ballet, music and voice tuition are also available. Although not yet consistent across the whole school, there are examples of good planning and schemes of work making full use of national guidance and other commercial materials. This means that pupils have tasks that are age appropriate and meet their interests. Exercises in reasoning are a weekly occurrence and older pupils are prepared well for their entrance examinations.

The school places a heavy emphasis on English and pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, speaking and listening from the moment they enter the

school in the Nursery. Pupils also make good progress and achieve well in mathematics and develop confidence in calculations. Mathematics has been an area of development for the school. Satisfactory progress is made in writing. While pupils write for a range of purposes the systematic development of accurate and well presented independent writing across the curriculum is not well established. Consequently although pupils' knowledge and understanding in different subjects is good they achieve less well in their written outcomes. Some pupils have to do too much copying in science, history and geography. Some pupils have pen friends in Grenada which provides a real purpose for writing.

Although there are some differences in provision between the two sites in the Foundation Stage, younger pupils mostly have access to a good range of activities in all the required areas of learning. They make a good start especially in communication, language and literacy which is then successfully built upon through the rest of the school.

There are regular opportunities for exercise provided through swimming, physical education (PE) and a range of after school clubs. Pupils enjoy their PE lessons and say that they would like more time for it. Personal, social and health education is taught regularly with aspects of health education covered in science lessons. There is usually one outside excursion each year for pupils although visits that are specifically curriculum related are limited but older pupils go to museums and local places of interest such as a 17th Century village. The school is not meeting all the requirements of the statement of special educational needs for one of its pupils.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching throughout the school. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. There are high expectations of behaviour to which pupils respond very well. Teachers are mostly well prepared for their lessons and use their good knowledge of the pupils to provide suitable activities and tasks. Work is usually well matched to the pupils' abilities and the recent introduction of telling pupils the main learning objective helps to keep the lessons suitably focussed.

Pupils like their teachers and find them helpful and willing to go over areas that are more difficult in order to help understanding. Teachers are good at asking questions that not only find out what pupils know but also provide an opportunity for pupils to put forward their own ideas and views. This successfully helps to build and develop self esteem and self confidence.

In the best lessons no time is wasted. Teaching and learning occur at a quick pace. Pupils are given precise instructions and it is made clear what has to be achieved. For example in two mathematics lessons for older pupils, on prime numbers and measuring angles, the introduction quickly and successfully enabled pupils to recap and move on in their thinking. This was followed by independent activities which flowed logically from the whole class activity and were well matched to need. This meant that pupils could settle quickly and work confidently making good progress.

In some lessons, although pupils' attitudes are good, there is insufficient or appropriate challenge especially where pupils are working independently. Sometimes teachers do not engage enough with pupils either singly or in small groups in order to teach specific skills to help pupils move on sufficiently.

Assessment is adequate. All teachers mark work regularly and sometimes make comments for future improvement but this is not consistent across the school. All teachers keep assessment records of test results. The school has recently introduced some nationally standardised testing in mathematics and is taking steps to develop this further, especially in English. It intends to use information more systematically to measure pupils' progress and achievement and set specific targets, which at present is ad hoc.

The school has good resources for teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage especially on one of the sites. Throughout the school resources are adequate. Teachers use them effectively to support learning. Both sites have rooms for information and communication technology which have a significant positive impact on pupils' learning and experiences.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils respond well to opportunities to develop self esteem and self confidence. They speak up in class and express their ideas. Older pupils hold confident and coherent discussions. In one Year 4 class the pupils value the very good practice in target setting for achievement, behaviour and contribution. Behaviour is good in and out of lessons. Pupils play well together at break times. They enjoy school, usually work hard in lessons and attend regularly.

Older pupils willingly look after younger ones for example in assembly and at the table at lunchtimes. Most classes have a number of jobs that are undertaken by pupils and other tasks such as library monitors all contribute to developing a sense of responsibility. One school site has recently started a school council in order to provide a pupil voice.

Pupils are developing good skills for their future economic well being. They make good progress in the key skills of numeracy and aspects of literacy. They work together well in pairs and small groups, happily sharing resources and ideas with each other during lessons. Pupils of all ages are polite and courteous and move around the school sensibly.

There are opportunities to contribute to the wider community. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about consulting with the council on a nearby development of the local environment. The school invites speakers from a number of professions. Local

services such as fire and police also make regular visits to talk to pupils. Pupils regularly raise money for charity and sing in a local residence for elderly people. Within the school community pupils enjoy taking part in productions, the local music festival and representing their school in sports teams. In assembly and religious education pupils learn about world faiths and religions.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety are inadequate. While the daily supervision of pupils is good the school does not meet the necessary requirements in a number of areas.

Staff have not had the required training for child protection and specific school procedures in this area are not adequate. However the school has arranged appropriate training in the near future. Policies and procedures for aspects of health and safety, including first aid, out of school visits, fire safety, risk assessments and completion of attendance registers, do not meet requirements. The school is already beginning to act on some of these issues.

Pupils learn about maintaining healthy bodies and healthy eating in science and personal and social education. The school has been involved in a recent local authority initiative to develop healthy eating in the Foundation Stage and received an outstanding commendation in a recent review. However a small number of parents expressed concern about the variety and quality of school meals. Pupils say they like their meals and feel that their suggestions have been taken into consideration. Most pupils bring healthy snacks to school. PE, swimming and after school clubs provide adequate opportunities for exercise.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has good procedures for the appointment of staff. The use of external guidance ensures that appropriate checks are carried out prior to appointment. All staff have received checks with the DfES or Criminal Records Bureau.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is accommodated on two sites. One is in a large Victorian house and the other is in a former hotel premises. In both premises school rooms are on two floors. The Botley site has more extensive accommodation and includes considerable space outside. The internal environment is enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. There is sufficient hard outside space at both sites for pupils to play games and staggered break times help to ease any congestion thus making the playgrounds safer.

A number of issues relating to health and safety of premises were identified during the inspection. Some matters were dealt with immediately and other issues are to be

dealt with as soon as possible. These include the restriction of upstairs windows, removal of debris from areas where pupils play, restricting the opening of the boiler room door from the kindergarten, blocking off a store room from the ICT room, ensuring all fire doors open easily and restricting arm access through the fence from the nursery decking area. Both school sites have ample outside play space for Reception pupils although it is not suitably enclosed.

There are sufficient washrooms on both sites but neither building has an appropriate room for pupils who are unwell. Classrooms are clean and tidy and the kitchens are maintained in a hygienic state. Environmental health inspections of the kitchens have been carried out, raising no significant issues.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

While the school has a prospectus it does not contain all the information it should, especially about policies and procedures, nor does it refer to policies which are available on request. Satisfactory reports about pupils' are sent to parents twice per year and there is an additional opportunity once each year for parents to meet their child's teacher. Teachers are always available at the start or the end of the day to talk with parents. Regular newsletters are sent home and a notice board provides clear information about the curriculum being taught. A small number of parents expressed concern about communication with the school.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a complaints procedure but this has not been made widely available. It is not as comprehensive as it should be in order to meet requirements. Additional procedures are required relating to the complaints process in the formal stages.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- ensure that the full requirements of pupils' statements of special education needs are met (paragraph 1(2)(e)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that policies and procedures regarding child protection comply fully with DfES guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- improve current procedures and policies for outside visits so that they have full regard to *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (reference HSPV2) (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- ensure that issues arising from the school's fire safety risk assessments are fully resolved (paragraph 3(5))
- ensure that first aid procedures are more detailed, first aid kits better placed and sufficient staff are trained to ensure that there is always at least one trained person on site (paragraph 3(6)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- improve health and safety by restricting the opening of all upstairs classroom windows, removing debris from areas where pupils play and ensuring that pupils cannot enter the boiler room from the kindergarten, block off the store room accessible from the ICT room and create a more restricted area for Reception pupils to play outside (paragraph 5(j))
- provide suitable facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- provide particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of SEN and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f))
- ensure that parents are aware that the following information is available:
 - particulars of the curriculum offered by the school (paragraph 6(2)(g))
 - particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h))
 - particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))

- details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must ensure:

- that if parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 7(f))
- that where there is a panel hearing of a complaint there is provision that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 7(g))
- that the procedure allows for parents to attend the panel hearing, and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h))
- that the complaints procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and the procedure stipulates that the complainant, proprietors and headteachers, and, where relevant, the person complained about, should be given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i))
- that the procedure provides for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j))
- that the procedure provides that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

Inspection of funded nursery education

Effectiveness of the funded nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and planning and assessment systems particularly good at the Botley site. Children are making good progress in all areas of learning, although the teaching of writing is very formal and younger children are taking part in activities which are sometimes, inappropriate for their

stage of development. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and use regular observations and assessments to identify and plan for the children's next steps in their learning. There is an emphasis on learning through play and, at the well resourced Botley site, the children have a huge choice of activity and are provided with stimulating and challenging learning experiences. Although these experiences are good at the Chandler's Ford site, the smaller rooms and limited resources do not enable children to influence their own learning in the same way. Both sites are able to offer support to those children with learning difficulties and for those who are learning English as an additional language.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are encouraged to be helpful and polite and they form good relationships with their friends and with adults. They are all confident and very well behaved.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are able to be involved in school life by joining the Friends of Woodhill school association. They share information about their children's progress at yearly meetings with the staff and can see their children's work at any time, although some would like more involvement in their children's learning. Parents are not provided with any information regarding the schools' policies and procedures and the information they receive about the Foundation Stage curriculum is inconsistent across the two sites.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a clear management structure within early years at the Botley site, although this is not replicated in the Chandlers Ford site. Both schools are effective in monitoring and evaluating the provision for nursery education to ensure that all areas of learning are fully developed. Management are not however, aware of all areas of weakness. Overall the school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Recommendations or actions to improve the funded nursery education

To improve the quality and standard of the nursery education the registered person should take account of the following recommendations:

- ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to practise their pre-writing skills and that mark making activities are at the correct level for their stage of development, before they move on to more formal writing activities
- provide parents with sufficient information regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum and the schools' policies and procedures
- ensure that management systems are consistent across the whole school.

School details

Name of school	Woodhill Preparatory School		
DfES number	850/6014		
Unique reference number	116540		
Unique reference number (funded nursery education)	EY291189		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1969		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 101	Girls: 91	Total: 192
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 15	Girls: 12	Total: 27
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys:	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number of children receiving funded nursery education	Boys: 27	Girls: 35	Total: 62
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 4050		
Address of school	61 Brownhill Road Chandler's Ford Eastleigh Hampshire SO53 2EH		
Telephone number	0238026 8012		
Fax number	0238025 5273		
Email address	office-cf@woodhill.hants.sch.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs M. Dacombe		
Proprietor	Mrs M. Dacombe		
Reporting inspector	Mr Daniel Towl HMI		
Childcare inspector	Alison Kaplonek CCI		
Dates of inspection	13-14 March 2007		