

The White House School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	893/6013
Unique Reference Number	123615
Inspection number	332450
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Marian Harker HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

The White House is an independent day school for boys and girls aged three to eleven years of age. The school was established in 1945 and one of its aims is to, *'prepare children for the opportunities, experience and responsibilities of society'*. There are currently 143 full-time and 11 part-time pupils on roll. The school also has an Early Years registration and this provision was inspected in July 2008. Thirty children receive nursery education funding. Pupils who attend the school come from a wide area and are primarily from White British backgrounds. The school is situated on the outskirts of Whitchurch in Shropshire. The school was last inspected in January 2005.

Evaluation of the school

The White House provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Throughout the school, pupils' personal development and behaviour are outstanding. Pupils enjoy coming to school very much and the large majority of parents hold the school in high regard. The school meets all the requirements for registration and has addressed the regulations not met at the last inspection. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is good.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum across the school and in the EYFS is good. The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced, and takes account of National Curriculum expectations. The curriculum for the EYFS closely follows the most recent requirements. Curriculum plans are in place for all subjects and an appropriate emphasis is given to the teaching of basic skills. Specialist teachers make a strong contribution to the curriculum. Provision for the teaching of reading is a strength and as a result pupils make outstanding progress in this respect. Reading is well resourced and teachers and parents are given good guidance to ensure a consistent approach to the development of reading throughout the school and at home. Pupils' reading skills are further enhanced by regular visits from parent volunteers who hear them read. The school uses a local sports field for games and has an appropriately sized hall on site to ensure that physical education (PE) lessons can take place throughout the year. The school's provision for information and communication technology has recently been improved with the installation of new

computers and updated resources. The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good and ensures that pupils have a secure understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Pupils enjoy and benefit from an extensive programme of stimulating visits and activities that enrich the curriculum. In particular, the school is rightly proud of its contribution to the Sir Edward German music festival that takes place locally every three years.

The quality of teaching across the school, including in the EYFS, is good and as a result pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress. All classrooms are well organised and attractively laid out with colourful displays of pupils' work. In addition, a variety of pupils' work is displayed around the school, creating a welcoming and attractive learning environment. Lessons are well structured and teachers use a good range of strategies to engage and motivate the pupils. Pupils settle to their work very quickly and have positive work habits. Teachers use questioning effectively to assess and challenge pupils during whole-class sessions. Opportunities are sometimes missed in lessons to develop independent learning skills. For example, too many worksheets are used in mathematics. Basic skills in spelling and handwriting are taught mainly through the use of published schemes; the small class sizes enable teachers to provide individual support. The quality of marking is good. The best examples of marking are written clearly and provide accurate and helpful guidance to enable the pupils to improve their work. The school has a good assessment framework in place that includes a range of standardised tests and National Curriculum assessments. The school's own data indicates that pupils make good progress across the school. Work seen in pupils' books, and discussions with them during the inspection, indicate that these assessments are accurate. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and receive good support in lessons. As a result, these pupils make good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Careful attention is given to pupils' spiritual development and they have a good awareness of their own religions and other world faiths. The school provides all pupils with regular opportunities, particularly in assemblies, to develop their self-knowledge and respect for others. The rector visits school to celebrate Christian festivals and classes visit several local churches. Provision for moral development is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent understanding of moral principles that enables them to tell right from wrong. Staff choose stories carefully to illustrate particular moral issues in literacy and PSHE lessons; this helps pupils to develop a clear awareness of the effect their actions have on themselves and others. The teachers and classroom assistants value what pupils have to say.

Pupils gain knowledge of public institutions and services in Britain through the 'people who help us' topic and citizenship units in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 6 study the work of magistrates and role-play scenarios of a court room. All pupils' social development is exemplary. Behaviour throughout the school is outstanding. Pupils

clearly enjoy coming to school and as a result, attendance is good. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to co-operate and they are very willing to take on school and class responsibilities, performing their duties diligently. A 'playground friends' system ensures that no-one feels left out. Older pupils play an important part in the smooth running of the school. However, some pupils report that they would appreciate more opportunities to play a part in decision-making. Good communication skills are developed through plentiful opportunities for speaking and listening and this prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Pupils raise funds for a wide range of charities. They provide entertainment at a local day centre at Christmas and gifts for the elderly at Harvest time.

Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils participate in the richness of world cultures through geography, religious education, the arts and PSHE. For example, the school's link with a school in Kenya has resulted in effective fundraising and communication through letters and photographs. Pupils study the major world faiths and study festivals such as the Passover, Eid and Divali. They learn about the clothes and foods of other cultures and compare and contrast these with their own culture.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety, including children in the EYFS, is good. Policies are thoughtfully written and centred on minimising risks. The current arrangements for child protection are robust. However, the designated person has not yet had training in line with current guidance; this has been arranged for later in the term. Pupils, staff and parents report that they appreciate the safe, caring, family environment provided by the school. They feel that the school helps pupils to settle in well and ensures that they are safe. The school promotes healthy living and eating and strives to ensure that all pupils have healthy snacks and nutritious packed lunches. The behaviour policy reflects the school's ethos and is implemented consistently in and out of lessons. Staff are excellent role models and have very high expectations. As a result, pupils are very well behaved, self-disciplined and show consideration to others. Owing to the high levels of day-to-day care provided by class teachers, problems are addressed very quickly and there has been no need for serious sanctions. One pupil said, 'Teachers sort out any problems quickly!' The school has suitable procedures for first aid and meets all fire safety regulations. The school keeps admission and attendance registers in line with the regulations. Sensible plans are in place to improve accessibility for those with disabilities.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school fully complies with the regulations in respect of the checks made on prospective employees with regard to their identity and suitability to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is located in a converted telephone exchange. The three storey building has been extensively modernised and provides good internal teaching areas. Specialist rooms for art and science as well as a well-stocked library are all good features. There is a gymnasium and a hard surfaced area for PE on the school site.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has established good links with parents, outside agencies and the local secondary school. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through informal meetings as well as twice-yearly review meetings and regular written reports. These reports are a helpful summary of progress and attainment in the key areas of learning. The prospectus has recently been updated and fully meets requirements.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clearly written and fair complaints procedure which meets the requirements. There have been no formal complaints in the last 12 months.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for the children in the EYFS is good, with some outstanding features. Children make outstanding progress in their personal development and communication skills. The curricular provision is interesting, relevant and closely linked to the early learning goals recommended for this age group. However, some planning documents lack consistency and sufficient detail about individual children's needs. Most children in the Kindergarten have only been in school for just over a term and a small group for just two weeks. The children experience working with an adult, in small groups and also independently. Classrooms are attractive with a good, varied range of resources to meet the needs of young children. Children are encouraged to explore their ideas and be creative. A good foundation is built for future learning. By the end of the EYFS, the children are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education. They are confident, enthusiastic and eager to learn. Assessment procedures related to the new EYFS framework are at an early stage of development. However, there is a significant amount of evidence from previous assessments, to indicate that staff assess the children's progress conscientiously. Currently, there is no base-line assessment in place to enable staff to measure progress from the very beginning, although the school has plans to introduce this procedure. A minority of parents indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaire that they would appreciate more information on their children's progress. Inspection evidence indicates that children achieve well over time in the EYFS due to the good quality teaching and effective leadership and management. The welfare provision for the children is good and monitored closely. Required risk assessments are in place

and all policies for the children's welfare and safety are implemented effectively. Staff have been checked for their suitability to work with children.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- take every opportunity to develop independent learning skills, particularly in mathematics
- ensure a consistent approach to EYFS planning that includes sufficient information on how individual needs will be met.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
--	--	---	--	--

The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		✓		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		✓		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	✓			
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		✓		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		✓		

School details

Name of school	The White House School		
DCSF number	893/6013		
Unique reference number	123615		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	243317		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1945		
Age range of pupils	3–11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 58	Girls: 85	Total: 143
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 10	Total: 11
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,150		
Address of school	Heath Road Whitchurch Shropshire SY13 2AA		
Telephone number	01948 662730		
Fax number	01948 662730		
Email address	whitehouseschool@btconnect.com		
Headteacher	Helen Clarke		
Proprietor	Helen Clarke		
Reporting inspector	Marian Harker HMI		
Dates of inspection	21–22 January 2009		