

Buckholme Towers School

Independent school inspection report

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| DCSF registration number | 836/6004 |
| Unique reference number | 296479 |
| Inspection number | 341935 |
| Inspection dates | 20 October 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | John Seal HMI |

Age group: 3–12

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², 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.

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Buckholme Towers School is located in the south coast town of Poole in Dorset. It is a co-educational independent day school for children aged from 3 to 12 years. The school is situated in an Edwardian house and opened in 1939 on the same site. The school's aims are to 'deliver a rounder education focusing on the academic, physical and spiritual development of all its pupils'. The school is registered for 135 pupils and there are currently 95 pupils on roll. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of one Nursery class and one Reception class. Nineteen of the children receive nursery education funding. The school and Foundation Stage were both last inspected by Ofsted in January 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Buckholme Towers School provides a good quality of education overall. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its approaches to assessment, and has made adequate progress in developing an outdoor area for the Foundation Stage. The pupils make good progress because of the good teaching and assessment, which are underpinned by the good curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their behaviour. At the time of the last inspection, all regulations were met, and during this inspection all but three of the regulations have been met. Safeguarding arrangements are only satisfactory because staff training is not fully up-to-date, the toilet and washroom facilities do not meet the requirements of the regulations for older pupils and staff, and the school has no overall plan for providing advice and information for older pupils in relation to their future.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education

The curriculum is good, as it was judged at the time of the last inspection. Based on the National Curriculum, it is broad, balanced and well planned from the youngest children to the older pupils in Year 7. There are a good range of extra-curricular activities including drama, dance and music. The basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are planned effectively and are taught well in different subjects. Curricular planning and guidance are well developed, although there is limited information regarding careers and future learning opportunities for the older pupils. The curriculum has some strengths, especially its provision of French, Latin and music. The school enhances pupils' learning experiences. For example, sailing and other water sports are on offer during the summer term and tennis at the local Lawn Tennis Association club. The school also makes good use of specialist teaching, examples of which can be seen in science, ICT, French, art, music and sport. Some of these specialist subjects are offered through the school's strong links with a large local independent secondary school. This is particularly effective for the older pupils, who develop their learning experiences in the science laboratories. There is a wide range of educational visits and visitors which include skiing and residential field trips.

Teaching and assessment in the Early Years and the rest of the school are good, as was the case in 2007. Lessons are well planned and have clear learning objectives. Pupils benefit from the small classes which are taught by teachers with good subject knowledge and good classroom management skills. During lessons, all pupils have many opportunities to work together or individually to discuss and plan their work. A good example of this was seen in the Year 4 class, where pupils were identifying appropriate 'autumn' words for their poetry writing. Most teachers use information about pupils' progress well and the school is beginning to use assessment strategies which maximise the progress individual pupils can make. Tracking systems are now in place to monitor pupils' progress over time but this approach is not yet used consistently across the school. The recently appointed director of studies has appropriate plans in place to develop assessment for learning even further.

Pupils make good progress from the start of the Foundation Stage to Year 7 and a significant proportion of them gain places at the grammar schools of their first choice.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as it was previously. From the Foundation Stage onwards, most pupils enjoy school life and are very enthusiastic. Work is well presented and pupils' behaviour is good, both in and out of the classrooms. Pupils' attendance is good, and they are keen to learn and are enthusiastic about their school life. A parent commented that her child in Reception wanted to come to school at weekends. Pupils' development of

basic skills is good and, as a result, preparation for their future economic well-being is good. The pupils contribute to school life through the school council and a variety of responsibilities. They make a positive contribution to the local community and have a good understanding of British institutions such as the police and fire services. There are good strategies in place to support pupils' better understanding and tolerance of different faiths and cultures. These include visits to a local synagogue and a Sikh temple.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for all pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. All but one of the regulations are met. At the time of the last inspection, all regulations were met, but because of additions to the safeguarding regulations since the inspection, the school does not meet the requirement regarding staff training for child protection. There are suitable plans in place to rectify this. In other respects, the care provided is good and the school environment is warm and friendly. Many people comment on the school's 'family feel'. Secure procedures are in place for ensuring that all staff have the required checks prior to appointment, such as those by the Criminal Records Bureau, and these are all recorded in the single register, as required. There are very few incidents of bullying and those that happen are dealt with swiftly. There have been no exclusions. Pupils' good awareness of how to live healthy lifestyles is reflected in the school's achievement of the Healthy Schools Standard. There is a wide range of well-attended sporting activities available. Risk assessments are carried out effectively and these promote all pupils' health and safety, both in and out of the school. The school has an appropriate development plan which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. However, access to toilets and washbasins for older pupils and the staff is inappropriate and does not meet requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enjoy their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. The setting fosters the children's happiness, health, safety and welfare effectively and safeguarding procedures are secure. Since the last inspection, the school has made some improvements in the outdoor provision. As a result, children are able to spend a greater proportion of time learning in an outdoor environment and the teachers' planning supports children getting the most from this. However, there is no running water or toilets in the Nursery which, even with the adequate strategies in place which overcome this lack of facilities, hinders the development of children's independence. Children settle well into school life because of the good links between staff, parents and carers, and there are effective transition arrangements across the Foundation Stage. There is a good range of interesting resources which, in conjunction with the good teaching, assessment and record-keeping, supports children's good progress towards their early learning goals effectively, enabling them to move seamlessly into Key Stage 1. Children's behaviour is good because of the skilful classroom management of the teachers. Children contribute well to the life of the school by taking part in school

routines, helping teachers and each other. Staff are suitably qualified in almost all areas, but during the time of the inspection, there was no member of staff with paediatric first aid certification. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and this has led to effective teamwork and planning to support children's good achievement.

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 and teaching (standard 1) and must:

- establish a coherent programme of careers advice and information for older pupils (paragraph 1(2)(g)).

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

- provide all staff with up-to-date training for child protection and safeguarding (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

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

- improve the toilet and washbasin facilities for older pupils and staff (paragraph 5(k)).

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure that there is at least one appropriately qualified person with paediatric first aid in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- improve the access to toilets and running water for the Nursery class.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- ensure that all teachers consistently use assessment information to match the individual needs of all pupils.

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 good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS? | | ✓ | | |
| What is the quality of provision in the EYFS? | | ✓ | | |
| How effectively is the EYFS led and managed? | | ✓ | | |
| Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS? | | ✓ | | |

School details

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|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|
| Name of school | Buckholme Towers School | | |
| DCSF number | 836/6004 | | |
| Unique reference number | 113930 | | |
| Type of school | Co-educational day school | | |
| Status | Independent | | |
| Date school opened | September 1939 | | |
| Age range of pupils | 3–12 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | | |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils) | Boys: 36 | Girls: 46 | Total: 82 |
| Number on roll (part-time pupils) | Boys: 7 | Girls: 6 | Total: 13 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £5,457 | | |
| Address of school | 18 Commercial Road Poole Dorset BH14 0JW | | |
| Telephone number | 01202 742871 | | |
| Fax number | 01202 740754 | | |
| Email address | office@buckholme.dorset.sch.uk | | |
| Headteacher | Mr Iain Robertson | | |
| Proprietor | Buckholme Towers School Limited | | |
| Reporting inspector | John Seal HMI | | |
| Dates of inspection | 20 October 2009 | | |