

# Woodhill Preparatory School

Independent school inspection report

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Reporting inspector Elisabeth Linley HMI

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

Age group: 3--11

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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, 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.<sup>1</sup>

## Information about the school

Woodhill Preparatory School is an independent day school situated on two sites that are based at Chandlers Ford and Botley in Hampshire. Both establishments provide for girls and boys aged from three to 11 years. There are currently 199 pupils on roll; of these, 47 children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage and 19 children attend part time. The school is in receipt of nursery funding for 44 children. Woodhill is a non-selective school and admits pupils with a wide range of abilities. One pupil who attends has a statement of special educational needs and one child is in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The school provides an after-school care club for pupils at both sites and pupils can stay on at school until 6.00pm every day. In addition there is a before-school care club which runs at the Chandlers Ford site. This provision is inspected as part of the main school's inspection.

The school aims to: provide a happy atmosphere in which pupils can thrive and feel successful; provide children with the opportunity for academic success; and provide a wide range of experiences and opportunities within the wider curriculum. The school opened in 1969 and was last inspected in March 2007.

## Evaluation of the school

Woodhill Preparatory School provides a good quality of education and is successful in meeting its stated aims. The majority of parents are supportive of the school's work and in particular they value the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is good. The school has worked hard to secure improvement since its last inspection, and as a result, the curriculum and teaching are now good and pupils make good progress. However, at the time of the last inspection staff had not completed child protection training and although the staff then complied with this requirement, staff appointed more recently have not undertaken the training as required. As a result, the school does not meet safeguarding requirements; provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety remains inadequate and a number of regulations are still not met.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

## Quality of education

The good quality of education provided by the school is underpinned by a good curriculum, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is broad and balanced and provides rigorous coverage of English and mathematics. An appropriate programme for the provision of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is also in place. French is taught to all year groups by a specialist peripatetic teacher. Specialist teachers also teach other subjects at the Chandlers Ford site including English, mathematics and physical education (PE). However, this approach is not replicated at the Botley site where, with the exception of French, pupils are taught by their class teacher for all subjects.

At both sites there is consistency of planning for all subjects and teachers' long- and medium-term planning is supported by commercially produced schemes of work. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is effective. This is exemplified by the sensitive support and focused provision for the pupil who has a statement of special educational needs. Work for pupils with special educational needs is underpinned by individual education plans that are well written and reviewed regularly. The school is also effective in meeting the needs of the child who has English as an additional language. This effective provision within the Early Years Foundation Stage reflects the good quality curriculum for children in the Nursery and Kindergarten classes.

The curriculum is enriched with an appropriate range of visits out of school. It is also enhanced by a good selection of extra-curricular activities such as music, dance, craft, chess and computers. The clubs' attendance registers show that there is a good level of participation in the activities offered. In addition, the school provides a before- and after-school club where children and pupils are well supervised and can play in a comfortable setting. Parents arrange for their children to attend on a regular or impromptu basis and pupils' attendance is carefully registered upon arrival at the club. Supervisors ensure that there is a broad range of recreational activities available. Pupils who attend, regardless of age, mix well with each other and enjoy having time to play with their friends.

Teaching and assessment are good for all pupils and for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In discussion, one pupil represented the views of many: 'Teachers make subjects interesting and prepare you well for the future. Teachers show you how to do things and explain things well.' Staff know their pupils very well and because there are small numbers in the classes, they respond quickly in lessons to ensure that pupils are supported effectively as well as challenged to do their best. To this end, teachers plan lessons effectively to meet pupils' individual needs. Pupils benefit from this quality of teaching from the moment they start school. In an outstanding lesson in Kindergarten, activities were very well planned to excite and enthuse the children. They very much enjoyed drawing around their feet as part of their work to learn about keeping healthy and the function of bones. Such high quality teaching is also evident in the rest of the school and on both sites.

Assessment and its use have improved since the last inspection. This is exemplified in the Early Years Foundation Stage where staff at the Chandlers Ford site benefit from the expertise of staff at the Botley site. As a result, assessment procedures are better than they were. This sharing of good practice, however, is underdeveloped throughout school among teachers, leaders and managers. Even so, assessment practice is developing well. Teachers set targets to help pupils improve their work and pupils have learning logs in mathematics, literacy and reading. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is now recorded to cover the results of a range of tests and assessments, including nationally standardised tests and optional tests that are taken by the pupils. The results of these tests, and the tracking of pupils' progress, show that pupils of different abilities, including those with specific educational needs, make good progress overall in relation to their different starting points.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, including for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils say that they like their small school, that they make friends easily and feel well supported by each other. Through the curriculum pupils' understanding of different cultures and traditions is developed; this promotes their understanding of diversity and respect for each other's differences. Pupils play and work together cooperatively; their enjoyment is exemplified by their very good attendance. Pupils enjoy their school responsibilities. They act as prefects, library monitors and head and deputy head girl and boy; Year 6 pupils are clear that such responsibilities are a privilege. Pupils also enjoy being on the school council; however, they would like meetings to be organised on a formal basis as they once were. A small number of pupils expressed concern about the school meals; a similar concern about their quality was also shared by a minority of parents. However, in discussion with pupils many confirmed that they enjoyed the meals; they said that they were healthy and that vegetables were regularly served.

Pupils are encouraged to do their best and to consider others within the wider community. As a result, they are keen to support charities such as Help for Heroes. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of them; they develop in confidence and show positive attitudes in all they do. They understand right from wrong and are clear about classroom and school rules; their behaviour is good. Through the curriculum, younger pupils develop an understanding of others who help them, and older pupils learn about public service organisations in Britain and the world of work. Pupils say that they are well prepared for moving on to the next stage in their education. Once their tests are over in the summer term, pupils in Year 6 embark on a week of careers education and this prepares them well for the future.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' and children's welfare, health and safety throughout the school is inadequate because implementation of its policy for safeguarding lacks rigour. As a result, staff who have been appointed in recent years have not attended child protection training. This particular issue was identified at the time of the last inspection. The school's work in other respects has improved since the last inspection. For example, first-aid procedures are more detailed and enough staff at both sites have now received the appropriate training. Health and safety procedures for educational visits are in place and issues identified by external consultants following fire risk assessments are resolved in a timely manner. All other policies are in place and meet requirements. Staff are sensitive to pupils' individual pastoral and welfare needs. Pupils report that they have no concerns about bullying and anything that does happen is dealt with quickly and effectively. As one pupil stated, 'We feel relaxed and safe in school. Teachers are trustworthy so we would always go to them; they care for us, listen to us and sort things out.' Pupils also report that through the school's programme for PSHE and other lessons such as PE and science they learn what it means to live a healthy lifestyle, for example through a sensible diet and regular exercise. In working to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002, the school has planned well to increase accessibility and will be drawing up a further plan to review the possibility of further improving access.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has implemented effective arrangements for the appointment of staff. All the required checks have been completed and recorded in a single, central register.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises at both Chandlers Ford and Botley are spread over two floors and provide sufficient space for the number of pupils on roll. Both properties provide a pleasant and effective environment for learning. At the Botley site there are extensive grounds and at both sites there is sufficient space for pupils to play outside and have games lessons on hard play areas. On both sites there are sufficient washrooms for pupils; however, hot water is not immediately available for pupils to wash their hands. Also, the Chandlers Ford site does not have an appropriate room for pupils who are taken ill while at school; this was an issue identified at the last inspection. The school buildings are maintained to a satisfactory standard. The classrooms are welcoming and kept clean and tidy and the kitchens are maintained as required; environmental health inspections have recently been carried out with a positive outcome. However, there is a need for more rigorous procedures to be adopted when preparing and serving food. The school acknowledges this matter and has taken immediate steps to address it appropriately.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The prospectus is supplemented by a website and newsletters that provide appropriate information about the school's work. Through the website, parents are made aware of the availability upon request of most of the school's policies and other information. However, not all the policies and information that have to be made available for parents and carers are included. In addition, a copy of the school's safeguarding children policy has not been made available through its website or sent out to parents and carers. In all other respects, the school meets requirements.

## Procedures for handling complaints

Since the last inspection the school has improved its policy and procedures for handling complaints and these now meet most of the requirements. However, additional procedures are still required to be added to the policy that relate to the complaints process in the formal stages.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Parents speak highly of the good quality provision at both sites that enables their children to achieve well. This is exemplified in particular at the Botley site by the children's work that is celebrated with displays of high quality. The highly interactive learning environments at Botley engage children in their learning as soon as they walk through the door of their classrooms. Children on both sites benefit from good quality pastoral care and a well-planned range of learning opportunities that meet their individual needs; these include a good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. In such activities, children learn to cooperate with each other and to develop their independence and assume roles of responsibility, for example, in Kindergarten, as snack monitors. Good use is made of the well-equipped outdoor play area for free-flow play activities at Botley. The outdoor area at Chandlers Ford is not as well resourced and does not provide a covered area. In addition, not all the children have immediate access to the outdoor area and outdoor learning is not an integral part of the teachers' planning. Assessment procedures are effective overall, although they are in the early stages of development at Chandlers Ford. Nonetheless, the tracking of children's progress shows that they make good progress towards the early learning goals in relation to their starting points. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well and areas for improvement are identified correctly.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>2</sup>

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 DCSF guidance, Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- meet requirements prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff (paragraph).

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

- provide hot water in all washrooms in order to meet the requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(a))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill at the Chandlers Ford site (paragraph 5(l))
- where food is served, ensure that there are adequate facilities for its hygienic preparation, serving and consumption (paragraph 5(m)).

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

- ensure that parents are aware that they can request particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(3)(e))
- ensure that parents are aware that details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year are available upon request (paragraph 6(3)(f))
- ensure that parents are aware that they can request details of the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(3)(g))

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<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm)



- make available through its website or, send to parents of pupils (and of prospective parents on request) a copy of the safeguarding children policy as prepared under paragraph 3(2)(b) (paragraph 6(4)).

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

- ensure that the complaints procedure stipulates that a copy of the findings and recommendations made by a panel is available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher (paragraph 7(i))
- ensure 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)).

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- Share good practice on a regular basis within each site and across the school.
- Ensure that staff at the Chandlers Ford site plan effectively for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to have regular access to outdoor learning.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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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				√
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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

Name of school	Woodhill Preparatory School		
DCSF number	850/6014		
Unique reference number	116540		
Type of school	Preparatory School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1969		
Age range of pupils	3–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 96	Girls: 84	Total: 180
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 10	Girls: 9	Total: 19
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 4,500		
Address of school	61 Brownhill Road Chandlers Ford Eastleigh SO53 2ER		
Telephone number	02380 268012		
Fax number	02380 268012		
Email address	Office-cf@woodhill.hants.sch.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Marjorie Dacombe		
Proprietor	Mrs Marjorie Dacombe		
Reporting inspector	Elisabeth Linley HMI		
Dates of inspection	11–12 November 2009		