

Silverhill School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

The inspection of registered provision was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

Silverhill School is an independent day school for boys and girls from six months to 11 years of age. It includes a nursery which is open for 51 weeks of the year and also provides after-school care. The school opened a baby unit in April 2010. The school is situated at Winterbourne, a rural location approximately eight miles from the centre of Bristol. The school was acquired by its present owners in 2006. There are currently 137 full-time and 97 part-time pupils on roll. This includes 60 children aged from six months to three years of age who attend the baby unit. Sixty-four children receive government nursery funding for three-to-four-year-olds. There are three pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school and nursery was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2008. The school aims to be a place 'where learning is inspiring and fun for every child'.

Evaluation of the school

Silverhill School provides its pupils with an outstanding quality of education and meets its aims. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. The school has improved since it was last inspected, and the premises and curriculum have been enhanced. The curriculum is now outstanding, and, along with good teaching and outstanding welfare, pupils make outstanding progress. The school now meets all of the regulations for registration as an independent school.

Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding. It is exceptionally broad, providing an excellent range of opportunities for pupils. All the required areas of learning are covered in the school's schemes of work and include French and Latin, swimming and outdoor

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents.

studies, along with opportunities for all pupils to learn to play a musical instrument. The planning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage covers all of the six required areas of learning. The pupils' interest and participation in art is developed through art competitions and exhibitions of their work in school. Speech and drama are an integral part of the school curriculum with a regular series of informal and formal performances. Sports education has been enhanced through expanding the range of sports on offer and by increasing the number of inter-school competitions. Pupils enjoy many enrichment and extra-curricular activities that include day and residential visits, after-school clubs such as music, debating, and set themes during the year such as science week and book week. These bring learning to life for pupils through inspiring first-hand experiences. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefited from a theatre company visit when they studied *The Tempest* as part of their Shakespeare topic. A thematic study of the Second World War was well supported with a visit to the 'women at work' workshop in Swindon. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is delivered through a 'social and emotional aspects of learning' programme, and the school's pastoral system. This produces confident, well-motivated and enthusiastic pupils who display a maturity often beyond their years. The curriculum overall has a clear impact on teaching and pupils' progress, and helps to secure high standards.

The school is non-selective and provides outstanding support for those with special educational needs. Where appropriate, individual education plans are developed and reviewed weekly by teachers, the headteacher, and parents and carers to ensure that targets for improvement are appropriate to pupils' needs, and are followed up. Additional support for pupils when required is provided by through coaching and specialist teachers and consultants.

Teaching and assessment are good overall, but assessment procedures are outstanding. Central to achieving this outcome is the drive for improvement provided by the headteacher and subject leaders. For example, the staff are supported by a comprehensive training and professional development programme that focuses on school priorities. Staff appraisals are rigorous and there is good knowledge of where teaching could be better. Staff know pupils' individual needs well and this information is used to provide good guidance and support when learning activities are underway. Pupils respond well in all lessons, showing interest and excellent concentration. The small number of pupils in each class means that pupils receive close attention and prompt support.

Other strengths of teaching include the teachers' enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge. Lessons are planned well to engage the pupils using a good range of stimulating and interesting resources. For example, pupils in a Year 3 science lesson were enthusiastic when learning about the properties of materials because of the challenging selection of objects. This resulted in them choosing to apply their knowledge of intersecting sets to help them manage the sorting. Teachers use a good range of questioning to challenge pupils and explore their understanding. At its best, this questioning is carefully targeted at individuals and enables them to make

outstanding progress. However, on a few occasions, opportunities are missed to question pupils' thinking deeply. Where progress is slower, but still at least satisfactory, this is often the result of assessment not being used quite as well as it could be to match work to pupils' individual needs. On these occasions, some pupils complete tasks quickly and are not provided with more challenging work. Nevertheless, pupils confirm that they find the normally very challenging tasks fun, and their work shows that good links are made between subjects to enhance their learning. From average starting points, pupils' excellent attitudes to learning ensure that they respond very positively to the good teaching and, as a result, their progress is outstanding and all pupils gain entry to the schools of their choice.

Procedures for assessing pupils' progress have strengthened since the last inspection and are now outstanding. Assessment data are rigorously recorded and analysed by staff to identify where pupils need support. There is very effective target setting and pupils are extremely clear about their targets. Relationships are excellent, with pupils being fully involved in their own assessment. The school monitors pupils' progress in class and homework very thoroughly by teacher assessments, moderated through the use of a range of suitable tests, and the information is used very well in most lessons to personalise the objectives for individuals and year groups. These reflect teachers' meticulous understanding of measurement of standards and progress against National Curriculum levels, and ensure that most lessons are appropriately challenging for all, including the higher-attaining pupils. Work is marked accurately and regularly, providing both praise and guidance about how to improve.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The impact is seen in the outstanding behaviour of pupils. Pupils are treated warmly, respectfully and fairly by all staff. In return, pupils respond by being polite, courteous and very well mannered. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school.

Attendance is good. Pupils have a very good work ethic and they are ready to learn. They listen very well. They develop confidence and high self-esteem because staff consistently praise their efforts and reward their achievements. Older pupils show care and concern for younger children helping them to learn and by acting as good role models at the dining table and at playtimes. In this way, pupils develop outstanding social skills and learn to be understanding of others' needs. The elected school council, the prefect system and the gardening club all contribute effectively to the development of roles of responsibility and empathy for others.

Pupils' cultural development is very well supported. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn through involvement in the local community, including the wide variety of extra-curricular activities that enrich pupils' artistic and sporting interests. For example, by joining in with the local community arts week, pupils learned how to

play Gammalan, Bangra and Bollywood dancing. Pupils' understanding of Britain's society and institutions is developed well through subjects such as history and visits to local museums and elsewhere. There are visitors to the school who support pupils' learning; for example, from Bristol Royal Infirmary. Major faiths and cultures are studied and festivals celebrated. Older pupils speak highly of the opportunities provided to help build and maintain an orphanage in India and how they help with running numerous fund-raising activities. The school is beginning to have a small but rising ethnic mix, with pupils from different backgrounds working and playing together harmoniously.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding. Robust and thorough policies and procedures are in place and are reviewed annually. Staff have an excellent knowledge of all the procedures. Staff are trained appropriately in paediatric care, first aid, anti-bullying and child protection requirements. The school premises are regularly risk assessed with very careful consideration given to any potential dangers related, for example, to fire and security. Staff care for pupils vigilantly and pupils say they feel very safe in school. The school operates as a particularly 'inclusive' community in which no-one is left out. Pupils are encouraged to develop strong friendships.

The outstanding school curriculum strongly promotes healthy eating and provides a wide range of physical education activities. Pupils told the inspectors how much they all enjoy school lunches (which all pupils take) and how they are encouraged to make healthy choices. They speak knowledgeably about healthy eating and know which choices are best for them. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All the required safeguarding checks on staff are made, such as those by the Criminal Records Bureau, and are recorded appropriately in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises provide a suitable environment that is safe and secure and enables pupils to learn and achieve. Although the playground is small, good use is made of two adventure play areas, a tennis court and two school fields at break times and for games lessons. Since the last inspection, continual improvements have been made to adapt the older buildings around the school site to provide for a range of specialist rooms. This includes accommodation for babies, an indoor play room, a music room, art room and science room as well as two attractively laid out libraries. A large garden provides pupils and parents with first-hand experiences of growing

food for the school's kitchen. A timely programme of outside redecoration of the older buildings is due to start in the new year.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or made available, to parents, carers and others through the school's website, prospectus and early years information guide. The school maintains good links with parents and carers through informative newsletters, and meetings with parent representatives from each year group. Information about pupils' attainment and progress is provided for parents and carers through three meetings and two clearly written reports each year.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy and procedures fully meet the requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The quality of provision is good and children achieve good outcomes. Rooms are attractive and of a good decorative standard. The outdoor area is well used and is being improved further to develop children's physical skills.

Staff demonstrate that they know how young children learn, for example by offering pertinent and open-ended questions. The children respond well with growing confidence and fluency. Planning for children in all age groups provides a good range of activities, including a suitable proportion initiated by the children themselves. Appropriate assessment processes are used to monitor each child's learning. The information is used well to prepare individual learning plans that provide a record of children's learning. High staff ratios, well-qualified staff and well-organised procedures help children in each age group to settle well and ensure that they are safe and well cared for. Health and hygiene are high priorities, minimising health and safety risks for all children and babies.

As a result of the good provision, babies and children make good progress, developing good skills and becoming more socially aware in preparation for their future. They enjoy their time at school.

Leadership and management are good. Managers regularly evaluate practice and support change and improvements to the curriculum. There is regular staff training and all staff are trained to the appropriate levels. The staff work very well as a team and have also established an excellent partnership with parents and carers. The good quality 'day books' are a particularly effective means of communication with parents and carers of the 0–3-year-olds. Procedures for risk assessments and safeguarding are robust.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').⁵

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development.

- Improve the quality of teaching further so that all learning is at least good and all pupils are challenged by good questioning and tasks that match pupils' needs.

⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2010/1997/contents/made.

Inspection judgements

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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage		√		
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage		√		
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage		√		
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		√		

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Primary		
Date school opened	2005		
Age range of pupils	0–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 69	Girls: 68	Total: 137
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 49	Girls: 48	Total: 97
Number of children aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 34	Girls: 26	Total: 60
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 1	Girls: 2	Total: 3
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,765		
Annual fees (childcare)	£5,190		
Address of school	Swan Lane Winterbourne Bristol BS36 1RL		
Telephone number	01454 772156		
Email address	head@silverhillschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Jenifer Capper and Julian Capper		
Proprietor	Jenifer Capper and Julian Capper		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Silverhill School, Winterbourne, Bristol, BS36 1RL

Thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed talking with you and visiting your lessons. Your school has continued to improve since it was last inspected in June 2008. You get an outstanding education at Silverhill. The curriculum has been improved and is now outstanding, providing you with an excellent range of opportunities in a wide range of different areas, including trips and visits, outdoor learning, art, drama and music. The headteacher is very keen to finish the outside area for the very youngest so they, too, can benefit from learning outdoors. Your behaviour is excellent and so are your attitudes to your work. You all get along well together and are very courteous to visitors. You make excellent progress in your learning because the teaching is good, the teachers plan activities that get you really interested in your work and you receive all the help you could need. However, at times, you could make even better progress in your lessons. In particular, the teachers' questioning could be improved to further challenge your thinking. We felt that the younger children could have more demanding activities to choose from after they had finished their work. We spoke with many of you during the inspection and you told us that you feel safe and well cared for. This is because the school has considered your welfare sensibly and put in place excellent procedures to keep you all safe. Thank you for making us so welcome and very best wishes for your future education.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk
Her Majesty's Inspector