

Farrowdale House School

Farrow Street, Shaw, Oldham, Lancashire, OL2 7AD

Inspection dates	20–22 May 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Good teaching helps to ensure that all groups of pupils, including those who find learning difficult and the most able make good progress.
- Teaching assistants help pupils that need extra support well. Assistants in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good contribution to children's learning through their help for individuals and groups.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage helps children make good progress in their personal development, speaking, reading and writing.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding aspects of the school. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. All pupils are keen to learn; they concentrate on their lessons and complete good amounts of work across all subjects.
- The school provides an excellent range of subjects and activities that meet the interests of pupils well and that they really enjoy. This helps them develop and use their reading, writing and mathematical skills across different subjects.
- The school's leaders, including the proprietor, have ensured that good teaching has secured good achievement and progress for all pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers are not provided with enough training to help them raise standards of teaching and learning to outstanding.
- More-able pupils are not always challenged to achieve their very best.
- The marking of work does not show pupils how well they are achieving against national standards.
- The checking and monitoring of pupils' progress is not consistent across all subjects.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by seven different teachers. They scrutinised pupils' work and held meetings with the proprietor, headteacher, staff and pupils.
- The school's documentation was checked including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of pupils' progress, assessment records and records pertaining to welfare, health and safety. The inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent schools regulations.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed in 11 questionnaires returned by staff and 31 responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's online 'Parent View' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chanan Tomlin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Saleem Hussain

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Farrowdale House School was founded in 1983 as a co-educational independent school for boys and girls between the ages of three and eleven years.
- The school is registered for 146 pupils. It currently has 81 pupils on roll. Seventeen children are funded under the government's nursery grant scheme. A very small number of pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school's premises in Shaw, Oldham were originally built in 1895 by local industrialists for educational purposes. They were subsequently used as a school by the local authority, from whom they were bought by the present proprietor.
- The school prepares pupils for entrance examinations to independent grammar schools. It sets high expectations and aims for academic rigour, traditional values and a happy, secure learning environment.
- The school's last inspection was in November 2008.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of achievement and progress to outstanding for all pupils by improving the ways teachers check and monitor pupils' progress in all subjects.
- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that more-able pupils in all year groups are always challenged to achieve their very best
 - establishing a system of marking that shows pupils how they are achieving against national standards.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - providing teachers with more training and opportunities to share outstanding practice
 - ensuring that the headteacher has enough time to observe lessons regularly in order to help teachers improve teaching and raise standards.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- Pupils have starting points that vary from below to above average. Throughout their time at the school, all pupils achieve well and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they finish Year 6, all pupils reach or exceed standards expected of them.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in the primary department acquire knowledge quickly and develop their understanding in a wide range of subjects securely. As a result, they are always well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- When children join the pre-school, most have skills that are typical for their age. During their time in the setting children make good progress in learning how to count accurately; they learn the sounds that letters make and can read and write simple words well. By the end of Reception, most are at a level expected for their age and are at a good level of personal development.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to make good progress; they become competent in developing their basic numeracy skills and learn how letters and sounds link together to form words. Many become skilled readers and writers. By the time they reach Year 3, most pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills are at or above the level expected for their age because of the good progress that they have made.
- Good progress continues in Years 3 to 6. As a result, all pupils who left Year 6 in 2013 achieved National Curriculum Level 5 or above in mathematics and English. Most of the current Year 6 pupils are exceeding the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics at Levels 5 and 6. As a result, they are well prepared for the secondary schools of their choices.
- Pupils enjoy reading; those that are more able read proficiently and fluently across many subjects. Pupils who find reading difficult receive enough support to help them make good progress.
- Pupils present their written work exceptionally well; most are very careful to spell, punctuate and use grammar accurately.
- Pupils with special educational needs are provided with good levels of challenge; as a result, they achieve well and make good progress. Not all the more-able pupils are challenged consistently to achieve outstanding results; these pupils are capable of working at even higher levels of achievement.
- Written work and test results for subjects other than English, mathematics and science show that achievement is good. However, systems for checking and monitoring progress in these subjects are not fully developed. As a result, teachers are not always clear about the things that they need to do in order to accelerate progress even further.

Quality of teaching

Good

- Teaching is good, ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress in all subjects including speaking, reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn effectively through a well-balanced range of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Teachers help children to successfully learn about sounds and improve their speaking and listening. For example, during a lesson on 'mini-beasts' children mimicked the sounds in 'butterfly' and 'bumblebee' and learned about the topic in different ways both indoors and outdoors.
- Teachers expect pupils to achieve well. They plan lessons carefully and use a good range of approaches and resources to make lessons interesting, enabling all pupils to make good

progress from their different starting points. As a result, pupils are motivated to concentrate and participate positively in lessons. In a Year 4 English lesson on persuasive writing, pupils analysed advertisements in pairs. These pupils worked hard to understand how advertisers may try to persuade potential customers through manipulative writing. One pupil commented on advertisers using the price £199.99 instead of £200 to make buyers think that they are getting a better deal.

- During lessons, teachers often adjust the work according to how well pupils are doing. For example, in a Year 6 Spanish lesson on different weather types, pupils started by repeating newly learned phrases and this progressed to acting and speaking together in pairs.
- Pupils are set homework that helps them consolidate what they have learned in school. All work is marked regularly and accurately, giving pupils clear guidance on areas that need to improve. Marking does not show pupils how they are achieving against national standards; as a result, they are not pushed to achieve consistently outstanding results.
- Teaching assistants provide pupils with extra help that helps them do well, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers and assistants know pupils very well; they have a good understanding of their abilities and interests and provide them with work that captures their interest and helps them make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although good teaching ensures that the most-able pupils make good progress, these pupils are not always challenged enough to make outstanding progress. This is especially the case in the lower school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding in lessons and around school. This contributes to a purposeful learning environment that helps pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes towards learning at all times. Pupils concentrate during lessons exceptionally well; they are always interested, get on with their work and are keen to learn new things.
- Pupils' excellent conduct, manners and punctuality are evidence of how proud they are of their school. Attendance is excellent; it has been above the national average over the past few years.
- Pupils show that they are very keen to learn by asking questions when they do not understand and by taking part in discussions and debates. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson pupils excitedly discussed why some people grow quicker than others while doing research on the lengths of each other's forearms.
- Pupils get along very well together and older pupils help younger ones in the playground and during lunchtimes. During lessons, pupils work together in pairs and groups; this helps them learn well and gives them valuable insights into the importance of teamwork. For example, Year 5 pupils wrote their own poems on 'A Water drop' but helped each other every step of the way.
- Pupils express their opinions about the running of the school through the students' council. This helps to organise fundraising events for charity and is often effective in improving the school. For example, the school has recently increased its sports resources in response to requests by the council.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Both pupils and parents agree that this is the case. The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are fully met.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe; they trust all members of staff to help them whenever they need assistance. Pupils are fully aware of the different forms of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying and cyber-bullying. Pupils say that bullying in the school hardly ever happens.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is outstanding and is a real strength of the school. Every day starts with an assembly when all of the pupils pray and

sing together. Assemblies are just one example of the many ways that pupils learn to appreciate how unique they are as individuals and the great benefits of taking part in whole school activities.

- Pupils gain a very well-developed knowledge of their own and other cultures through religious education, personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship, history and art; they enjoy cultural weeks, an 'Around the World Week' and they learn about major religions. As a result, they appreciate and promote diversity and challenge prejudice and discrimination. There are planned visits to places of worship for pupils.

Leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have ensured good teaching for all year groups in all subjects. As a result, all pupils regardless of their abilities or starting points achieve well and make consistently good progress.
- Senior leaders have developed policies that help ensure good progress in literacy.
- Senior leaders are good role models and convey high expectations to staff and pupils. They make good use of resources and teaching assistants are deployed well to help pupils that need extra assistance.
- The pastoral team and all staff ensure that all pupils, including those whose circumstances might put them at risk, receive the support that they need. As a result, all pupils succeed in their learning and make real gains in their personal development.
- The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Leaders carefully monitor the delivery of all the learning and development requirements. They ensure that teaching strategies are effective in meeting the needs of individuals and groups of children. Tracking arrangements for all groups of children are monitored regularly by senior leaders to ensure that they all make good progress.
- Because of the small size of the school, some teachers have extra responsibilities such as leading subjects. Subject leaders provide good support to teachers and help ensure that pupils make consistent gains in their learning.
- Senior leaders assess the school's strengths and areas that need to improve accurately. The headteacher observes lessons and guides teachers on ways that they can improve teaching. However, due to her own teaching schedule, these events are not frequent enough to raise standards of teaching to outstanding.
- Training has been provided for some teachers to improve their knowledge and skills in dealing with pupils with special educational needs. Overall, teachers are not provided with enough training to improve teaching and standards in the school and there are not enough opportunities for teachers to share outstanding practice.
- The range of subjects and activities provided by the school is an outstanding feature of the school; these meet the interests of pupils exceptionally well and are enjoyed by all.
- The school has an excellent variety of clubs some of which help pupils develop and use their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Clubs help keep pupils happy and engaged at all times. They include those for musical instruments, revision, chess, netball, dance, crafts and an accomplished choir that performs publicly throughout the year.
- All safeguarding requirements are fully met and the school works well with other agencies to ensure that pupils are always safe.
- Parents and carers are welcome in the school; they receive regular updates about their children's progress and attend regular meetings. Some parents from different cultures attend school and share their ways of life with pupils. Those who responded to the 'Parent View' survey and who spoke with the inspectors were happy with all aspects of the school's work.
- The proprietor is in school every day. She is fully involved in the running of the school and takes a special interest in the progress that individual pupils make. She frequently challenges senior leaders to improve different aspects of the school's provision.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that all the independent school standards and the

requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website:
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	105747
Inspection number	443500
DfE registration number	353/6014

This inspection was carried out 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.

Type of school	Primary day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Number of part time pupils	4
Proprietor	Mrs Cecilia Joan Ashworth
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	Miss Zoe Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2008
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,890
Telephone number	01706 844533
Fax number	Not applicable
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