

Silverhill School

Swan Lane, Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1RL

Inspection dates

23–25 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The passion and dedication of the headteacher to provide the very best education for pupils shines through all aspects of the school.
- Leaders put pupils at the heart of all they do and have the highest expectations of staff and pupils. They are relentless in their quest to further improve this outstanding school.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers are highly motivated and passionate about their work, which instils in pupils a love of learning.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Staff have a deep knowledge and excellent understanding of how young children learn. Consequently, children are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The curriculum is extensive. Pupils have the opportunity to learn across a comprehensive range of subjects. These are enhanced by the wide-ranging additional activities the school offers.
- Relationships between staff and pupils in the school are excellent. This enables pupils to build high levels of trust with adults in a nurturing environment.
- The well-being of every pupil is of paramount importance to staff. They know pupils extremely well. They are exceptionally vigilant in their approach to their welfare and safeguard them effectively.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have an exceptionally clear understanding of what acceptable behaviour is. They are kind, caring and considerate to each other.
- The proprietors play an active role in the school. They challenge and support the staff effectively and ensure that all the independent school standards continue to be met successfully.
- Parents speak highly of the school. They appreciate the quality of education and care that the school provides for their children.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils' written work in other subjects is of the same high quality as in their work in English.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational. She is passionate and extremely knowledgeable about how children learn. She demonstrates a relentless determination to provide pupils with the very best education. Consequently, all of the independent school standards are successfully met.
- The headteacher is ably supported by a highly committed, motivated and talented staff. They share the headteacher's high aspirations for excellence in all aspects of the school's work. 'I am very proud to work at this school. It is a unique environment where pupils and staff are offered such exceptional experiences' is typical of the comments made by staff.
- School leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is accurate. Leaders link the school development plan closely to their evaluation, fastidiously tracking and monitoring the impact of their actions. As a result, leaders have a precise understanding of what works well and why.
- The targets set for teachers are used very effectively to hold them to account for pupils' performance. Staff welcome the high-quality professional development and training provided by leaders, which is pivotal in ensuring that the quality of teaching remains outstanding.
- The curriculum is outstanding. Pupils have access to all the national curriculum subjects and a range of other subjects, including Latin. A cross-curricular approach is used which promotes pupils' high-level thinking skills and encourages them to explore their own learning journey and self-discovery. Learning sequences are tailored by teachers to make effective links across subjects and make activities fun for pupils. However, the school is not complacent and is working hard to ensure that pupils' written work in other subjects is of the same high quality as in their English.
- There is a substantial range of extra-curricular activities that pupils can join, which include an assortment of music lessons, dance, sports, and speech and drama. These activities are equally accessible to all pupils, demonstrating the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Learning is enhanced by an extensive variety of trips, visits and cultural experiences, all carefully planned to enrich the educational experiences of pupils. For example, Year 5 pupils relished the opportunity to meet the author John Dougherty at Clifton College, and pupils from all classes had the opportunity to attend a Roald Dahl workshop performing as 'Oompa Loompas'.
- Excellent relationships between members of staff, the pupils and parents are fundamental to the continuing success of the school. The school's core values – 'learning is inspiring and fun for every child', 'education and care of the children must be based on a harmonious relationship between the school and the parents' and 'Silverhill is a place to develop self-confidence and self-discipline and to learn good manners and consideration for others' – are eloquently summarised in one of many comments by parents praising the work of the school, 'Great school, excellent atmosphere and a family feel, they have done wonders with our children, who have flourished here.' Consequently, pupils enjoy their time at the school, achieve extremely well and develop a love of learning.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded successfully throughout the curriculum and based on the school's core values. Pupils take part in a wide range of community activities to support vulnerable people in this country and others. For example, the school has successfully raised a considerable amount of money to support a village in Southern India.
- The school is very successful in developing pupils' understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain. Consequently, pupils talk knowledgeably about democracy, respect and equality of opportunity. For example, older pupils were able to talk with understanding about the recent referendum in Britain and the presidential elections in America.
- The school strongly encourages pupils to have high aspirations. For example, an entrepreneur recently spoke to older pupils about setting up a business. In addition, pupils spoke with delight when a helicopter, piloted by a past pupil, landed on the grounds. They carefully listened to him talk about the skills required to become a successful pilot.
- The proprietors ensure that the school is well maintained. Teaching rooms are welcoming with a wide variety of learning resources. Pupils have access to a range of well-appointed specialist classrooms, including a science laboratory, art studio, music room and library.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education and care their children are being given at Silverhill. All who responded to the questionnaire or who spoke to inspectors would recommend the school. The views of parents were eloquently summed up with the following comment, 'Silverhill School, and more appropriately its headmistress and staff, are absolutely amazing.'

Governance

- The proprietors of the school share the determination to provide a high-quality education for its pupils. They provide a stimulating environment where pupils are safe and secure. They have leaders who are unrelenting in driving forward school improvement and making the school the best that it can be.
- The proprietors know the school exceptionally well. They challenge leaders from a position of knowledge and understanding. They ensure that all the independent school standards continue to be successfully met.
- Finances are closely monitored to ensure that the financial stability of the school is maintained. For example, while the school does not receive any additional funding, they allocate money appropriately to precisely meet the needs of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders are relentless in ensuring that they provide an environment where pupils feel safe and secure. The policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe are skilfully woven throughout all aspects of the school's work and are clearly accessible on the school's website. Staff receive regular updates on current legislation and guidance to keep pupils safe.
- The school does not shy away from controversial matters. For example, staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding, including child sexual exploitation and the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Consequently, staff have a clear understanding of the need to protect pupils from all possible risks. In addition, parents have welcomed the guidance the school has given them in minimising risk to their children, including internet safety.

- Leaders meticulously monitor pupils' safety and development and are assiduous in following up any concerns. They work effectively with outside agencies to minimise the risk of harm to any pupil. Great diligence is shown in the recruitment of staff. All staff are carefully vetted prior to commencing employment. Records are detailed and of high quality.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is of a consistently high quality. Teachers show passion and enthusiasm to provide pupils with the very best learning experiences. Consequently, pupils make rapid progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are exceptional. Adults provide a positive climate for learning which encourages pupils to be enthusiastic and inquisitive learners. Activities are planned that excite and inspire pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to explore new challenges and to take risks with their learning.
- Specialist teachers, who have significant expertise in the subjects they teach, enthuse pupils. Their strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm lead pupils to engage swiftly in their learning. For example, in a Year 6 French class pupils were absorbed in providing directions for a pupil to follow. They provided these directions in French with accurate vocabulary and pronunciation.
- Teachers are aspirational and have consistently high expectations of pupils. They show a desire for pupils to realise their full potential. For example, in Year 5, pupils are able to improve their writing by selecting exciting vocabulary choices to bring their composition alive to the reader.
- The high-quality questioning by teachers and support staff is impressive. They routinely challenge pupils by using probing questioning which makes them think deeply and increase their rates of progress. For example, in a pre-school class, a child was asked what would happen to green paint if black was added. The teacher allowed the child to respond before testing out the child's response.
- Teachers are constantly monitoring pupils' learning and progress. They provide ongoing feedback to pupils which is highly effective in guiding and accelerating the progress pupils make. As a result of this monitoring, teachers have an accurate knowledge of what pupils know, can do and understand. Consequently, they provide pupils with activities which are well matched to their needs.
- The most-able pupils are quickly identified by teachers. They are challenged significantly in their learning by teachers providing bespoke activities to ensure that they make the best possible progress. Work is set which extends their knowledge and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics. They are able to use skills learned successfully across a range of subjects. As a result, the most able pupils make consistently strong progress.
- As a result of outstanding teaching, coupled with interventions which precisely meet the needs of individual pupils, those identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress in their reading, writing and mathematics and achieve well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The pastoral leader ensures that pupils receive high-quality care, guidance and support which enable pupils to feel safe and nurtured. As a result, pupils develop into extremely confident and self-assured young people who work and play harmoniously together.
- Pupils have a good understanding of risks in and out of school appropriate to their age and stage of development. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 could explain articulately the importance of keeping safe when using the internet, including not giving out personal information, and the action to take if they had any concerns.
- The policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe are rigorous. All staff receive high-quality training. This ensures that the safety of pupils is not compromised and that they are kept safe from harm.
- The school works effectively with outside agencies to maintain the safety and well-being of pupils and to ensure that pupils receive well-targeted support to meet their needs effectively.
- The school actively encourages pupils to stay fit and healthy. Pupils are able to make informed choices about healthy eating and keeping themselves fit. They have access to wide-open spaces in which to play at playtimes and lunchtimes. Additional sporting activities provide pupils with further opportunities to keep healthy.
- Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. This is reflected in attendance levels which are consistently above the national average. No pupils are persistently absent.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils of all ages and stages of development have an exceptionally clear understanding of what acceptable behaviour is. Parents, staff and pupils talk positively about the behaviour in the school.
- In lessons, pupils are polite and courteous and demonstrate high levels of respect towards adults, each other and property. These behaviours are reflected at playtimes and lunchtimes. Staff comment favourably about pupils' exemplary behaviour and conduct. For example, pupils do not hesitate to pick other children's coats up when they fall onto the ground.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to their learning, and demonstrate high levels of motivation, concentration and resilience. Consequently, incidences of low-level disruption in lessons are extremely rare, which enables them to make outstanding progress.
- Pupils are fully aware of the different forms of bullying and told inspectors that there was no bullying in the school. Inspectors viewed a wide range of evidence to show that bullying is exceedingly rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Children start pre-school at the age of three with a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result of outstanding provision and highly skilled staff, children

quickly learn to be independent and build their skills across all areas of learning. For example, 'the Silverhill coat challenge' encourages children to independently take off their coats and hang them on their peg. Consequently, children in the pre-school make rapid progress and are well prepared to enter the Reception classes.

- Children arrive in Reception confident and inquisitive learners, questioning and exploring what is going on around them. They demonstrate their developing skills in mathematics, reading and writing. The most able children are challenged appropriately in their learning. For example, they are able to write sentences independently with accurate pencil grip and correct letter formation. Children in the Reception classes make outstanding progress as a result of outstanding practice. They leave Reception with skills above what is expected for their age.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are typically making outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They are able to apply these skills effectively across a wide range of other subjects. However, the written work in their books in subjects other than English does not consistently demonstrate the outstanding progress pupils are making in the subject that is evident when talking with them. For example, work viewed in pupils' history books did not reflect their depth of understanding of the topics covered.
- Leaders keep a careful track on the progress of each individual pupil. As a result, they have a detailed and accurate understanding of what each pupil can and cannot do, planning learning activities which effectively meet their needs.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils quickly develop a love of reading. They have access to books from a wide range of authors and subjects to broaden their literary knowledge. Consequently, pupils' reading ages are above and often well above those expected for their age. In 2016, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving a high standard in their reading was above the national average. This is especially so for the most able readers. They are able to discuss favoured authors or preferred styles, resulting in them enjoying and excelling in their reading.
- Progress in mathematics is outstanding across the school. Teachers plan activities which excite and motivate pupils, incorporating high levels of challenge. There is a clear focus on pupils' mastery of mathematics and practical application to ensure that pupils have a deep understanding of concepts taught. For example, in a Year 6 class, pupils are able to apply their mathematical knowledge to organise data and create frequency tables with confidence and skill.
- The most able pupils are consistently working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics and are consequently achieving well above other pupils nationally in these subjects. Teachers know exactly what these pupils can do and what they need to do in order for them to excel across a wide range of subjects. For example, lessons in Latin are reinforcing skills learned in English grammar, which enables pupils to produce written work of a very high quality.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making outstanding progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. This is due to outstanding teaching and high-quality interventions which meet the needs of each pupil.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership and management of the early years provision are outstanding. Leadership is highly effective in meeting the independent school standards in this provision.
- The early years leader is passionate about the quality of education that the children receive. Her drive and determination for constant improvement is tangible, ensuring that children leave the early years very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The relationships between staff and children are incredibly strong as a result of staff knowing each child extremely well and fully meeting their individual needs.
- Staff in the pre-school and Reception classes provide children with rich and varied learning experiences. There is a strong focus on phonics, alongside instilling a love of books. For example, children in a pre-school class were absorbed in their phonics session. As a result of outstanding practice, children were able to accurately sound out letters and apply their knowledge in identifying words beginning with the same sound. Pencil grip has been accurately taught to enable children to be successful in early mark-making.
- Areas of learning are well organised, providing children with a range of activities to make links in their learning and stimulate creativity. For example, children were fascinated with the Christmas story. They were able to use pictures to accurately retell the story using complete sentences. Other children were able to speak with confidence about the different seasons, including what time of the year daffodils grow. Consequently, children develop into inquisitive learners.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Staff act as positive role models and constantly demonstrate high expectations of children's behaviour. Consequently, children in the pre-school quickly learn the boundaries of what they can and cannot do which provides a strong foundation as they move into the Reception classes.
- Staff are well trained in all aspects of keeping children safe. They watch children carefully and know the actions to take if they were to have any concerns about a child's safety. As a result, children feel safe and secure, enjoying their early experiences of education.
- Parents are delighted with how quickly their children settle in the early years and with the quality of education their children are receiving. They welcome the frequent opportunities they have to talk with staff and review their child's learning journal, effectively linking learning at home and school. A typical comment made by parents with children in the early years was, 'My child is making excellent progress and are being given a head start in their early education.'

School details

Unique reference number	109355
DfE registration number	803/6002
Inspection number	10020727

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Number of part-time pupils	38
Proprietor	Careernature Ltd
Chair	Julian Capper
Headteacher	Jenifer Capper
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,540–8,490
Telephone number	01454 772156
Website	www.silverhillschool.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@silverhillschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 November 2011

Information about this school

- Silverhill is an independent school in South Gloucestershire.
- The school was founded in 1947 and moved to its current site in 1992.
- The proprietors have responsibility for the governance of the school.
- When the school was last inspected in November 2011, it was judged to be outstanding. At that time, the school met all independent school standards.
- In the early years provision, the Nursery offers places to children from the age of two. They are taught in two classes, 'Bunnies' and 'Owls', with some attending on a part-time

basis. Children in Reception are taught in two classes and attend full time.

- The majority of pupils are White British and most pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- There are no pupils at the school who come into the category of being regarded as disadvantaged through being known to be eligible for free school meals or being looked after.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a number of lessons or part lessons, most of which were jointly visited with leaders.
- Meetings were held with leaders, staff and the proprietors.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection, including school leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, and data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and attendance information.
- The inspection team scrutinised the quality of pupils' work over time.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- The 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account, along with the 41 text messages received. Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the day. Views from the 18 completed staff questionnaires were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Bragg

Ofsted Inspector

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