

Farrowdale House School

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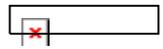
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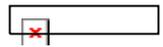
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School details

Introduction and summary

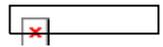


Purpose and scope of the inspection



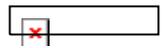
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



Farrowdale House School is a small, independent, co-educational preparatory school situated in the town of Shaw, near Oldham. The school was established in 1983. It provides primary education for children aged 3 to 11 years. There are 106 fulltime pupils on roll of whom 26 are below compulsory school age and funded under the government's Nursery Grant scheme. Most pupils attend the pre-reception and reception classes but others are admitted following interviews with both parents and pupils. No pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. The school's main aim is "to offer a full academic curriculum within the framework of traditional values and the expectation of high personal achievement."

Summary of main findings



Farrowdale House School provides a good education for its pupils. It is a happy school where pupils are encouraged to develop a caring attitude to others. The pupils' personal development is promoted effectively through the school's family atmosphere. They become well-mannered, confident and respectful young people who enjoy coming to school. The quality of teaching is good

considerably enhanced by a wide range of educational visits in the United Kingdom and abroad. The Foundation Stage curriculum is taught effectively to pupils in the pre-reception and reception classes. The assessment of pupils' work is good and this contributes to the high standards that are reached by the time they leave school. Most are successful in gaining places or scholarships at appropriate local independent secondary schools.

What the school does well

- its provides a good quality curriculum;
- the quality of teaching is good;
- its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils behave well;
- it ensures good relationships between staff and pupils; and
- it takes good care of its pupils and provides well for their welfare, health and safety.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations

- ensure that the admission register indicates to which school pupils transfer and produce and implement a policy for recording absences in registers.

Next steps

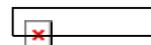
Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- build further on the school's caring ethos to ensure that pupils who need extra support are identified promptly in line with the policy for pupils with special educational needs; and
- develop strategies to more closely match lesson plans to meet the full range of ability.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum



The quality of the curriculum is good. There is a written curriculum policy supported by detailed subject policies and schemes of work. Most curricular planning is based on National Curriculum guidance and published schemes of work. There is no specific scheme of work for design and technology (DT) which is usually taught within the art curriculum or for religious education (RE) which is included in other subjects and assemblies. However, provision for both subjects is sound. Curricular planning for each year group is good. Long- and medium-term planning is detailed and provides a firm foundation for teaching and learning. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and promotes the pupils' progress effectively.

The school prepares pupils thoroughly in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Curricular provision for English, mathematics and science has appropriate emphasis. Other subjects of the curriculum are given sufficient attention and time. The school makes good use of teachers' specialist knowledge and interests to provide a curriculum that is particularly strong in ICT and science. Pupils have three periods of physical education each week consisting of gymnastics and games together with swimming for Key Stage 2 pupils.

Opportunities for pupils to write for specific purposes are provided in a wide range of subjects, for example, recording findings in experiments in science, using persuasive writing in ICT, and writing poems and book reviews. Consequently, pupils make good progress in their writing skills as they move through the school.

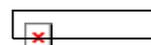
The school has some pupils below compulsory school age. These pupils are given an appropriate range of experiences, with due regard to national guidance for this age group. They make good progress towards achieving all of the early learning goals for this stage of education, and particularly so in their personal, social and emotional development. Provision for outdoor play for all pupils in the Foundation Stage is very good, as the pupils are given many opportunities to use mobile wheeled toys and other apparatus to promote successfully their physical development. The curriculum is planned thoroughly for the reception pupils who continue to make good progress in their final year of the Foundation Stage. The team of three staff works well together to provide a high quality curriculum.

Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. A guitar club is held at lunchtime once a week. There are three classes of French after school each week.

No pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN), although the school has an appropriate SEN policy. Pupils who experience difficulties with reading are given extra support. Although most planning clearly matches tasks to the needs of individual pupils, this is not as rigorous as it could be in all lessons. As a result, higher achieving pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and some less able pupils find their work too difficult.

The school has a carefully planned programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which helps to develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence successfully. It fully supports the school's philosophy and values, pervading lessons and interactions between staff and pupils. Pupils explore citizenship at a local level by considering how decisions are made about their own community. Older pupils are studying the processes involved in the forthcoming general election.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching in the school is good. Lessons are well planned. Learning objectives and key expectations from the task are often shared with the pupils. Effective use is made of closing sessions at the end of lessons to assess pupils' learning. When work is well matched to pupils' abilities they make at least good progress, ensuring that they achieve levels appropriate to their abilities. For example, in a mathematics lesson on compass points, higher attaining pupils were able to make very good progress when provided with challenging work which they completed independently. In this lesson, less able pupils were well supported by the teacher with work appropriate to their abilities. Progress is less marked for pupils where all the class are expected to work at the same level.

Teachers use questioning effectively to link pupils' prior learning with current learning. This allows pupils to make relevant and meaningful connections. For example, in an ICT lesson for reception pupils, the introduction to making sets of objects was successfully developed on the computer. Very young children were able to make the link between the physical apparatus and the computer-generated images. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and confidence with ICT ensures good pace and appropriate levels of challenge in lessons.

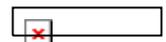
Good relationships with pupils are fostered throughout the school. In discussions, pupils are encouraged to listen to and respect the views of others. Pupils know that their teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and achievement. For example, during a vigorous, good-humoured games session, the older pupils accepted the umpire's decisions gracefully and fully accepted the need for rules.

Assessment is good. It is used most effectively where teachers consistently refer to previous assessments when planning future lessons. Comments on pupils' work are constructive and generally indicate success as well as defining what needs to be done to meet objectives. The school regularly assesses pupils against nationally agreed criteria as well as the benchmarks required for the various entrance examinations of other establishments.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are well behaved, polite and are confident in their interactions with adults and their peers. They develop positive attitudes towards each other and their learning. There are clear rules for behaviour, understood by all pupils, which are reinforced in assemblies and during lessons. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. They are given opportunities to reflect on moral dilemmas through specific themes in assemblies. Older pupils consider the implications of smoking and alcohol abuse whilst younger pupils are reflective when listening to stories with a moral point, for example, on welcoming a newcomer.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and agreed strategies are enforced consistently. Pupils report that there is no bullying in the school and clearly understand the school's high expectations in this area. Pupils are helpful to one another and demonstrate courtesy and good manners. In an English lesson, pupils spontaneously applauded the efforts of a classmate who overcame shyness to read out a poem.

Older pupils in each key stage are given responsibility to ensure the well-being of younger pupils, escorting them to lunch and supervising changeovers of classes and lunchtimes. Playground

"buddies" and prefects ensure friendly and purposeful play during break times. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions where staff and pupils enjoy their meal together. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are given opportunities to experience residential visits in the UK and abroad which further develop their independence and team spirit.

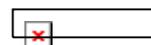
Through the PSHE curriculum and in RE lessons, pupils develop a broad understanding of major world faiths. The school celebrates the diverse culture of its pupils. Often, individual pupils lead the school in the celebration of their own major festivals and holidays. For example, a Hindu pupil in Year 4 led the Diwali assembly whilst on another occasion a pupil performed traditional Irish dancing on St. Patrick's Day. Pupils in the pre-reception and reception class used a Jewish Seder plate and ate matzos as part of their study of Passover. The school encourages pupils to show respect for other cultures, at the same time valuing their own country's traditions and heritage. Visits are made to a Viking museum and a replicated Tudor settlement to support history. Local art galleries and museums are visited regularly and the pupils have opportunities to enjoy the theatre and ballet. Each year the school organises a skiing trip and the families of all children are invited. This year 61 children and their parents went, at Easter, to Les Deux Alpes in France.

Pupils have been generous in their efforts in raising substantial amounts for those less fortunate than themselves. Recent donations have been made to several local and national charities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. All the policies required by the regulations are in place and have been checked against national recommendations. The school's anti-bullying policy is clear and comprehensive. Pupils report that they feel able to talk to any member of staff if they have any concerns and that any problems are dealt with by staff quickly. Any serious misdemeanours by pupils, although rare, are recorded.

Fire safety is good, with fire drills undertaken each term. The time taken to evacuate the building should be logged. Appropriate fire risk assessments have been completed. Evacuation procedures are evident throughout the school and are fully understood by staff and pupils. Staff are deployed appropriately throughout the day and pupils are supervised carefully, especially at break times, when at least two members of staff are on duty. Three adults hold current First Aid qualifications. The school has an appropriate written First Aid policy and suitable equipment.

The admission register contains almost all of the information required by current regulations, but does not show the names of the schools to which pupils transfer. Attendance registers are not completed consistently throughout the school, for example, a variety of codes is used to record absences and lateness. The school has already put procedures in place to resolve this issue. There is an appropriate statement with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002, together with a detailed three-year action plan of the school's intentions to improve its existing facilities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

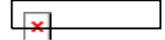
The school meets all but one of the requirements.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that the admission register indicates to which school pupils transfer and produce a whole school policy for coding absences in registers. (paragraph 3(9)).

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

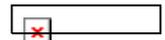


The school is owned by a sole proprietor. All staff have been subject to satisfactory clearance with the Criminal Records Bureau at an enhanced level. Prior to the confirmation of their appointment, the school requests character references and makes detailed checks to ascertain the identity, employment history, qualifications and medical fitness of staff.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The premises and accommodation are suitable for their purpose. The school is situated in a Victorian building built at the turn of the 20th century. There are seven classrooms and an unusually large hall for this type of premises. In 2002, an ICT suite was installed in an appropriate room behind the stage in the hall. Some classrooms are small, although adequate for the current number of pupils using them. The classroom for Foundation Stage pupils is sufficiently spacious. All classrooms are maintained to a high standard both in decoration and fittings. They are considerably enhanced by attractive and informative displays of pupils' work.

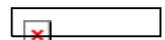
Toilet facilities meet requirements, although a second toilet for the pre-reception pupils would ease congestion at break times. The facilities for pupils who are ill are adequate.

Lunches are cooked on the premises and served in the large hall, which is also used as a gymnasium and assembly room. Outdoor play space is limited to a hard surfaced playground, which becomes busy when all pupils gather there. There is no grassed area but the school makes good use of a nearby sports field and local swimming pool.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school provides parents and prospective parents with comprehensive and useful information through its prospectus. This document contains details on admissions and full details of key school policies including child protection, behaviour management, exclusions and details of the school's curriculum provision. The school informs parents of the range of policies that they may request to

school's entrance lobby.

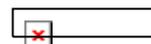
Parents make good use of homework and reading diaries where they record comments and concerns. Parents of pre-school and reception class children are invited to termly conferences to discuss and comment on their child's progress detailed in the pupil's Foundation Stage Profile (assessment record).

Two open evenings are held each academic year. The school also provides parents with an end-of-year written report along with an interim report in February, which records grades for English and mathematics. Reports for pupils in Years 2 and 6 contain the results of the national tests. The reports give parents clear and useful information about their children's progress and attainment. They contain positive encouragement as well as clear judgements on next steps to success. The greater majority of parents feel well informed about their child's progress in school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

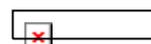


The school's complaints policy and procedures meet all requirements. The prospectus contains the complaints policy and is available for parents and prospective parents.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	Farrowdale House School
DfES ref number:	353/6014
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	3-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 67, Girls 39, Total 106
Annual fees (day pupils):	£3,900
Address of school:	Farrow Street Shaw Oldham Lancashire OL2 7AD
E-mail address:	farrowdale@aol.com
Telephone number:	01706 844533
Headteacher:	Mr F G Wilkinson
Proprietor:	Mrs C J Ashworth
Lead Inspector:	Mrs C K Corfield
Dates of inspection:	25 - 28 April 2005

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