

# Silverhill School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	803/6002
Unique Reference Number	109355
Inspection number	329726
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Linda Kelsey HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Silverhill school is a co-educational independent day school for pupils' aged two and a half to eleven years. It opened in 1947 and moved to its present site in 1992. Currently there are 188 pupils on roll. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational need. This is the first inspection since registration.

The school is set in an attractive, self-contained, 10-acre site with sports pitches, tennis courts and play areas. The dining room, library and administrative offices are in the main building, Winterbourne House. The coach house is used for classrooms. There is a range of additional buildings used as classrooms, specialist rooms for art, pottery, cookery, information and communication technology (ICT), science, music and French. There is a separate hall. The aims of the schools are to give children the best education possible, 'where learning is inspiring and fun for every child.'

## Evaluation of the school

Silverhill school is providing an outstanding education for its pupils. This is because teaching and assessment of pupils is outstanding and as a result pupils make outstanding progress. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is also outstanding and as a result pupils have an excellent attitude to work and play; progress over time is outstanding. Pupils leave the school well prepared for their future schools and lives.

The school meets the majority of the regulations. The care, welfare and guidance given to pupils is good, although the school has not completed all its records and checks of all staff. Behaviour is good overall because some pupils spoke of some low level bullying amongst girls which has not been fully addressed. The quality of the accommodation is improving rapidly under the present ownership. This, together with the strong commitment of all staff, is why this school is developing as a successful school.

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## Quality of education

The quality of education is outstanding because teachers plan well and infuse an infectious enthusiasm for learning in all pupils. There are good structures to lessons, based on an outstanding curriculum.

The curriculum is outstanding because it offers a broad and balanced range of subjects as well as a modern foreign language and Latin. This, together with the specialist teaching in physical education (PE), history, geography, religious education, science, art, music, drama and information and communication technology (ICT), gives pupils an exciting and challenging diet of learning. Pupils take part in competitive sport and musical productions as well as singing in the choir. They go on a number of trips and outings and listen to specialist visitors to the school. There is a range of good quality work around the school and in pupils' books and this indicates high standards are achieved in all subjects.

Teachers use a wide range of different strategies to engage and motivate pupils, including peer work, individual work or times for pupils to explain to others what they understand. As a result, pupils are involved in their own learning and know the targets set for them to improve. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They respond to challenge and are happy to show proudly the work they have done. Pupils respond very well to teachers' skilful use of questioning. Lessons give challenge to pupils who are the most able as well as offering support, through teaching assistants, to those who find learning more difficult. As a result of this outstanding teaching all pupils make outstanding progress and many achieve well against their own individual targets and against pupils nationally. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge whether delivering specialist subjects such as Latin, science, history or core subjects such as English, mathematics, science and ICT. Lesson planning includes opportunities for assessment. This good assessment in lessons, and the national testing of pupils, as well as the monitoring of pupils' progress over time, enables the school to have a good view of how well each individual pupil is doing.

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

The school makes outstanding provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. Most pupils are very articulate, confident young people who eagerly join in discussions. There is excellent behaviour both in class and around the school. Pupils relate very positively to their teachers and to their learning and as a result attendance is above average. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils are aware of cultural differences and the school engenders understanding and respect through visiting parents' talks and links with an Indian orphanage. Various religious festivals from across the world are celebrated. Good use is made of circle time and assemblies for spiritual reflection in a non-denominational atmosphere.

There is a wide range of school trips and visitors to the school which are well supervised and funded by the school. One Year 5 pupil, as part of a competition, has designed a Roman garden in the school grounds and this in turn was built by the pupils. Trips include visits to France, and wildlife centres; these are enjoyed and appreciated by pupils. Many take part in festivals, choir, and playing musical instruments. Pupils learn about public institutions and services through regular visits from police and other emergency services which ensure that pupils understand their roles and responsibilities in the wider community.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Welfare, health and safety of pupils are good and pupils are well known by staff. Relationships are very good between staff and pupils. The school cares well for them as seen by the attention given to promoting their well-being and enjoyment of school. Pupils know who to turn to should they have any problems. Policies for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are robust. Risk assessments are carried out across all areas of school life. The school has a clear behaviour policy and the school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Bullying is dealt with appropriately, although pupils mentioned that some is a bit more persistent. They say it is relatively rare, and know it will be dealt with effectively should it occur.

There is a good range of games opportunities offered including lacrosse, hockey, rugby, and swimming. Pupils are encouraged to choose healthy lifestyles, through sound dietary policy and procedures, with healthy and seasonal food options, including salad and fruit, offered at lunchtimes. Pupils are encouraged through science lessons and cookery lessons to think carefully about healthy eating and parents are encouraged to provide children with healthy snacks. Despite there being no pool at the school, pupils swim regularly and recently came 4<sup>th</sup> in the 14<sup>th</sup> national Swimming Championships for Primary Schools.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has not established suitable procedures for ensuring that, prior to taking up their responsibilities, all teaching, non-teaching staff, volunteers, and the proprietorial body are checked for medical history. It has also not ensured that all volunteers who work in the school have been checked for suitability to work among children.

## School's premises and accommodation

The proprietors have worked hard in the two years they have been at the school to address some of the problems with the buildings found at the time of the last inspection. As one parent rightly commented, 'I do feel that the 'owners' have tried really hard to bring the school back to life after a period of stagnation. There has

been improvement in the buildings and it is going to take some time and considerable investment to bring the buildings up to scratch.'

The school's accommodation and grounds are vast. The school has a continuous programme of maintenance and decoration which it is carrying out. Most of the buildings are now in at least an adequate state to maintain excellent teaching. They do not compromise the high standards of teaching being achieved at the school or the overall safety of the pupils. A number of paving slabs and concrete paths are uneven and cracked but pupils are carefully monitored and they know about the hazards. There are various access points and ramps for wheelchairs.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a wide range of information for parents, carers and others, through its school prospectus, website and information sheets. These are informative, accurate and comprehensive. The majority of parents are positive about the school and many confirmed that they are kept well informed about their child's progress. They have a clear overview of the progress that their child is making, although the school does not publish the results of academic tests that the pupils take. Parents do not access the range of policies that the school has because as yet it does not make it clear to parents that these are available on request.

### Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a complaints procedure which is known to parents and available on request. However, it does not yet set out a timescale for the management of a complaint or ensure that the procedures enable the panel to make recommendations and make these available to the complainant, proprietors and headteachers.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

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

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, the school needs to ensure that all medical checks have been carried out and that volunteers working in the school have been checked for suitability to work among children. (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

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

- provide particulars of examination results. (paragraph 6(2)(i))

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

- provide a timescale, in the school's procedures, for the management of a complaint (paragraph 7(c)).
- ensure that procedures provide for the panel to make recommendations and for copies of these and any finding to be available to the complainant, proprietors and headteachers where relevant (paragraph 7(i)).

## School details

Name of school	Silverhill School		
DCSF number	803/6002		
Unique reference number	109355		
Type of school	Nursery and Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1947		
Age range of pupils	2-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 71	Girls: 60	Total: 131
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 29	Girls: 28	Total: 57
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number of children receiving funded nursery education	Boys: 40	Girls: 35	Total: 75
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 4575.00 - £ 5955.00		
Address of school	Swan Lane Winterbourne Bristol BS36 1RL		
Telephone number	01454772156		
Fax number	01454777141		
Email address	head@silverhillschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Jenifer Capper		
Proprietor	Mrs Jenifer Capper and Mr Julian Capper		
Reporting inspector	Linda Kelsey HMI		
Dates of inspection	25–26 June 2008		