



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION REPORT

OAKHILL SCHOOL

JANUARY 2018



CONTENTS

SCHOOL'S DETAILS	3
1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION	4
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
2. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION	5
Preface	5
Key Findings	6
PART 1 – Quality of education provided	6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils	6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	6
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools	6
PART 6 – Provision of information	7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled	7
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools	7
THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	8
Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision	8
Effectiveness of leadership and management	8
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	9
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	9
Outcomes for children	10
Compliance with statutory requirements	10
Recommendation for further improvement	10
3. INSPECTION EVIDENCE	11

SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Oakhill School			
DfE number	888/6012			
Registered charity number	1048514			
Address	Wiswell Lane Whalley Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 9AF			
Telephone number	01254 823546			
Email address	enquiries@oakhillschool.co.uk			
Principal	Mrs Carmel Crouch			
Chair of governors	Mr Anthony Baron			
Age range	0 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	317			
	Boys	161	Girls	156
	Nursery	160	Prep	80
	Seniors	75		
Inspection dates	24 to 25 January 2018			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Oakhill School is an independent day school for girls and boys from the age of 0 to 16. It was founded in 1978, meeting the need for an independent Roman Catholic day secondary school in the Clitheroe area. The preparatory school and nursery were established in the early 1990s and a leisure centre was built for use by members of the school and the local community in 2007. The school's proprietor is Oakhill College, Whalley Ltd, and is supported by an advisory governing body which is chaired by the chairman of the company.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has increased its provision within the early years by adding an extra room to cater for pre-school children. The playground facilities for early years and prep have been refurbished to include an all-weather sports pitch. The school has invested in a management information system to improve communication and centralise important information.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school seeks to focus upon the needs of its pupils and to provide a faith-based education for children of all abilities. It aims to provide a happy, safe and stimulating education within a family environment; to develop spiritual awareness, encourage self-worth and challenge pupils to achieve; to instil mutual respect and understanding, and teach the value of service to others.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from the local rural and urban areas, mostly from white British families living within a 10-mile radius of the school, but with a number from ethnic minorities reflecting the make-up of the local population.
- 1.5 National standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils throughout the school is above average, although with some variation from year to year. The school has identified 53 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 25 of whom receive additional specialist help. Five pupils have educational, health and care (EHC) plans. English is an additional language (EAL) for three pupils, two of whom receive extra support for their learning.

2. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key Findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the prep school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2017, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 2.20 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.21 A team of enthusiastic staff and committed managers place a high priority upon the children's well-being and, consequently the children forge excellent relationships with staff and feel happy and secure in their environment. As a result, the children's progress is rapid. Carefully planned activities reflect children's needs and interests and staff make very good use of the setting's resources, although the outdoor area is not yet fully utilised for the youngest children, who consequently have limited opportunities to develop their physical and exploratory skills in an outdoor environment.
- 2.22 Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in the setting. The baby and toddler rooms have been relocated, and the rooms are now linked. The newly appointed management team is strong and effective and has successfully targeted specific areas for improvement which has resulted in positive changes within the setting, notably in the planning of activities for the children. The managers are committed to continuous improvement and successfully ensure that all children in the setting receive the highest standards of care. The recommendation from the previous inspection, regarding the implementation of a system of supervision meetings, has been addressed.
- 2.23 The requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare have all been fully met. There are effective policies and procedures in place to ensure staff are kept up to date and aware of their responsibilities.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 2.24 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.
- 2.25 The recently appointed management team has been successful in achieving its vision for the setting by delivering high-quality care and education to children, focused on their needs, and supported by a team of dedicated and caring staff. Effective systems are in place for regular supervision meetings and these have enabled staff to request and attend relevant training courses to enhance their practice, to ensure they are aware of up-to-date ideas and have the skills to provide the children with a stimulating educational experience. However, a formal process of performance management is not yet fully embedded.
- 2.26 Self-evaluation takes into account the views of parents and staff. Staff and leaders consider the interests and needs of the children in the setting in any changes and developments. Previously, questionnaires have been sent to parents to ensure their views are considered.
- 2.27 Staff plan according to children's needs and interests. Learning programmes cover all the requirements and provide children with opportunities to develop their interests and acquire new skills. Staff ensure that a range of varied and well-planned activities offer a balance and breadth of learning within a child's day. Children are very well prepared for the next stage in their learning as a result of skilled staff who recognise the next steps children should take and provide opportunities for their development.
- 2.28 The setting actively promotes equality and diversity and offers resources and activities to all children. The children come from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds, and the setting recognises this and so celebrates events such as Chinese New Year, the festival of Eid as well as Christian feasts such as Christmas and Easter. British values are embedded in daily practice as staff set high standards and demonstrate how to respect others. From a young age, children are encouraged to take turns and share.

- 2.29 All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Leaders are well trained and ensure staff know their responsibilities in safeguarding children. Safety is carefully considered, and children are able to learn and develop in a secure environment, whilst having opportunities to take age-appropriate risks.
- 2.30 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, and in discussion, parents expressed extremely positive views about the setting. They commented on the friendly and welcoming staff, and their nurturing attitude towards the children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 2.31 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- 2.32 Managers and staff lead by example and set high expectations of what each child can achieve. Staff are highly skilled at working with young children and are consistently enthusiastic and energetic in all they do. As a result, children are alert, happy and interested in their environment and the activities the staff plan for them. Staff know how to engage and interact with young children very effectively, and children respond positively to all adults in the room and show a great interest in learning. The setting promotes equality and recognises diversity, and the well-resourced rooms offer children a wide range of activities.
- 2.33 Parents are given the opportunity to contribute to their child's baseline assessment on entry, and staff use this to plan children's next steps. Observations are completed using an online learning journal and staff use next steps very effectively to plan activities which are appropriate to each child. Summative assessments allow staff and managers to identify any child who may need additional support if they are either not meeting or are exceeding expectations. Staff ensure activities are appropriate to the needs of the child and this enables them all to make very good, and often rapid, progress
- 2.34 Staff's communication with the children and each other is a real strength of the setting. Inspectors frequently heard staff sharing relevant information about the children with each other, and this allows all staff to be aware of children's next steps and day-to-day care. Staff create a welcoming and homely environment. Babies were seen kicking with excitement as they engaged with staff, and staff were seen patiently listening to a toddler who had just learnt to say a few words. Staff seize every opportunity to promote children's learning; for example, staff encouraged babies to look at the 'wibbly, wobbly, jelly' at lunchtime.
- 2.35 Parents are able to contribute to the online learning journal and can see the progress their child is making when they view the observations made by staff alongside age-related expectations. Daily record sheets provide parents with food and sleep information, and staff speak to parents at collection about their children's achievements.
- 2.36 The high-quality interactions and activities, and strong positive relationships with staff, enable children to develop effectively in all areas of learning, thereby providing them with the foundations for their next stage.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 2.37 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding.
- 2.38 Managers and staff support and encourage children to develop their independence and follow their interests, and have created a secure and happy environment which enables children to be highly successful learners. Children demonstrate high levels of curiosity and interest in their surroundings, as seen by inspectors who observed a new child displaying confidence in exploring the toddler room, closely watched by staff.
- 2.39 Strong relationships between children and staff allow children to feel safe and grow in self-confidence. Children show exceptional levels of self-assurance and independence from a young age, as seen when a baby happily left its carer to crawl across the room to investigate the inspector's laptop. The setting allows children opportunities to explore; the recent addition of climbing equipment in the toddler

room offers children the chance to climb steps independently, crawl through a tunnel and come down a slide. In the baby room, children were seen smiling with delight as staff sang familiar songs and showed high levels of focus when a child chose a book which staff then read to him.

- 2.40 The linked baby and toddler rooms allow babies to become familiar with both the toddler room and staff, prior to transitioning. Staff are aware of the strong bonds children form and, therefore, have worked hard to successfully establish very effective relationships with children who may find the transition particularly challenging. The key worker system is highly effective, and suitable systems are in place to provide support for children should their key worker be absent. Children were seen to have extremely strong bonds with all adults in the room, not just their key worker. Staff were seen gently settling children to sleep, sitting by them if needed and then comforting them once they woke up.
- 2.41 Children are encouraged to have respect for each other, and staff demonstrate sharing and turn taking to young babies who both want the same toy. Children demonstrated high levels of self-control for their age, and babies were seen happily waiting for their lunch as it was given out. High standards of hygiene were noted, and staff were seen wiping children's highchairs and hands before lunch. Children ate well and clearly enjoyed their food. Staff encourage those who are able to feed themselves, and care is taken to ensure the food is appropriately cut up or blended.

Outcomes for children

- 2.42 Outcomes for children are outstanding.
- 2.43 All children make good and many make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. Staff and managers carefully track children to ensure support and intervention is given to those who need it.
- 2.44 The youngest babies were seen developing their physical skills as they held on to the bar and stood up in front of the mirror. Staff had noted their interest in looking at reflections and had a basket of shiny reflective toys for them to investigate. Children display high levels of independence and curiosity as they move around the room and explore resources readily accessible to them. Babies were seen tackling wooden shape puzzles and exploring ice which had been placed in a large tray on the floor for them. The development of children's communication and language skills is highly effective, helped by staff interacting with children using open-ended questions, repeating phrases and modelling language for them. As a result, children's language skills are very well developed in relation to their age.
- 2.45 Toddlers were seen enjoying sensory experiences and developing their fine motor skills as they played with dinosaurs in flour and used cutters and rolling pins in play dough. Children communicate effectively to staff using early language and gestures which staff understand. Staff encourage children to participate in songs and rhymes, and children take great delight in recognising these and being able to join in with repeating phrases. Young children were heard repeating 'go' as staff used 'ready, steady, go' before rolling a ball to them, and a child was seen turning pages of a book and making the noises of the animals he could see.
- 2.46 Staff take great care to ensure all children develop the necessary skills so they are ready for the next stage of their learning.

Compliance with statutory requirements

- 2.47 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

Recommendation for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Increase opportunities for the youngest children to explore and develop their physical skills in the outdoor environment.

3. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr William Ibbetson-Price	Reporting inspector
Mrs Rani Tandon	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, GSA school)
Ms Victoria Plenderleith	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former head of pre-prep, IAPS school)
Mrs Angela Beck	Team inspector for EYFS (Deputy head, pre-preparatory, Society of Heads school)