

Leicester Preparatory School

2 Albert Road, Stoneygate, Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 2AA

Inspection dates

9–11 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders do not have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, there is no programme of monitoring and evaluation to check the quality of teaching and learning in all areas of the school.
- The school's appraisal process does not focus sufficiently on how staff can improve outcomes for pupils. Opportunities for professional development are limited.
- The quality of the school's documentation is inconsistent. For example, curriculum schemes of work are out of date and some risk assessments do not contain the same level of detail as others.
- The proprietor is unable to check effectively on the school's provision because the headteacher does not provide sufficiently detailed monitoring information. The school does not engage regularly with other educational establishments in order to compare the quality of the school's work.
- Assessment information is not used effectively to identify where improvements could be made. For example, standards in mathematics are not as high as in reading and writing. The school's plan to raise attainment is not precise enough in guiding teachers on how to improve standards further in mathematics.
- The proprietor has not ensured that all independent school standards have been met.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff are strongly committed to the school and create a warm, family atmosphere where pupils are safe and happy.
- The teaching of reading, writing and phonics in the early years and key stage 1 is particularly effective.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are respectful of others and develop good social skills. There are positive relationships between all members of the school community.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. Most pupils achieve standards that are at least in line with, or better than, expectations for their age.
- The early years is led effectively. Children achieve well, and make good progress.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school and have confidence in the school to keep their children safe and support their learning effectively.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management of the school by:
 - providing opportunities for school leaders to engage with colleagues beyond the school to share practice and support professional development
 - developing a thorough process to appraise staff performance, ensuring that staff maintain and improve outcomes for pupils and have access to professional development
 - ensuring that schemes of work are regularly reviewed and updated so they inform and reflect what is taught in each subject
 - ensuring that all risk assessments are detailed and up to date.
- Ensure that leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision by:
 - making sure that the quality of teaching is monitored regularly and effectively throughout the school
 - using assessment information effectively to identify where provision could be further improved.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up effectively (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a)).
- The proprietor ensures that particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations, are made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate (32(1)(b), 32(3)(e)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The proprietor and headteacher have not ensured that all the independent school standards have been met. The standards relating to the provision of written schemes of work for teachers and pupils to follow are not met. These schemes are out of date and do not match the learning that is taking place. The standard relating to particulars of the school's performance in the previous academic year is not met because there is no summary of pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 1 or key stage 2.
- Leaders do not demonstrate a clear knowledge of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve further. The school does not have a whole-school programme of monitoring and evaluation overseen by the headteacher. There are occasional, informal checks on teaching and learning, but these are not recorded or used to support teachers' professional development.
- Pupils are assessed regularly to check on their learning. Leaders have a good knowledge of individual pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this information is not used effectively to check on the progress of groups of pupils over time, or to provide an overview of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school's appraisal process (the management of staff performance) does not focus sufficiently on making sure staff are able to maintain and improve outcomes for pupils. Opportunities for professional development are limited.
- The school does not engage regularly with other educational establishments nor seeks to benchmark the school's performance against other schools. Consequently, the school's self-evaluation lacks precision. Some areas for development have been identified from the school's assessment information. However, the plan to raise attainment does not make clear how improvement will be brought about and how success will be measured.
- Leaders' oversight of attendance is not precise enough. Individual pupils' absence is followed up in a timely manner, but leaders do not monitor or analyse patterns of absence.
- The quality of documentation held by the school is inconsistent. Records held by the leaders for the early years and phonics demonstrate that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is being monitored and appropriate actions are taken as a result of their findings. However this is not reflected throughout the school. Other records, for example risk assessments, are not consistently detailed and documents, such as the curriculum schemes of work, are not up to date.
- The curriculum beyond English and mathematics is broad and pupils study some subjects in depth. Pupils also learn different languages (French, Chinese and Latin), and all key stage 2 pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Older pupils develop their speaking skills through English Speaking Board assessments.
- Pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding through a range of visits and activities. Pupils told one inspector about visits to different places of worship, which helped them learn about other faiths and cultures. A skiing trip to Italy provided pupils with experience of another European country. British values are promoted through

the curriculum. For example, pupils learned about democracy and compared Greek city states with the British parliament.

Governance

- The proprietor's understanding of the quality of the school's provision lacks precision. He is not able to check effectively on the school's performance because the headteacher does not provide sufficiently detailed monitoring information about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.
- The proprietor recognises the need for the school to engage frequently with other educational establishments in order to share good practice, and to compare and moderate the quality of the school's work. He is keen to ensure that parents and carers are consulted and has taken steps to set up a parents' group to support the governance of the school. This is at an early stage and has not yet been fully established.
- The proprietor knows the safeguarding duties and is committed to the welfare, safety and well-being of staff and pupils. He has a good understanding of compliance with statutory requirements and regularly monitors aspects of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff know pupils well and are alert to any minor changes which could cause concern. They monitor pupils' welfare carefully and note any concerns which are then followed up by the designated lead for safeguarding. The school works with external agencies when necessary.
- The recently appointed designated safeguarding lead has attended appropriate training for her role and has ensured that all staff are up to date with the latest government guidance, including training on the 'Prevent' duty. Informal discussion also takes place so that information can be shared as appropriate.
- The school engages well with parents and encourages them to play an active part in their child's education. As a result, there is frequent, contact between staff and parents, ensuring good communication at all times to facilitate support and keep pupils safe.
- The safeguarding policy is available on the school website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- There are well-established routines which enable pupils to settle quickly to their learning. Pupils are attentive and are keen to participate in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and set tasks that challenge pupils to reflect on what they already know or to find out about something new. For example, in key stage 1 mathematics, pupils carried out practical activities on capacity, working carefully and accurately, and explained their findings confidently.
- Teachers sometimes work effectively together to ensure that pupils are able to access learning at their individual level. For example, younger pupils from two classes are taught phonics in small groups, organised according to their learning needs. Children from the Nursery class also join these groups when they are ready for this stage of learning.

- Pupils appreciate the different types of learning, as well as the different subjects about which they learn. For example, drama activities help pupils understand and explain their learning. One pupil commented, 'Fun activities make you more intrigued.'
- Pupils' books showed a range of work in different subjects. Books are mainly neat and well presented. The standard of work is appropriate to pupils' ages. However, the quality of writing in some subjects, such as science or history, is sometimes not as good as in English.
- Work is assessed regularly and pupils' individual progress is tracked carefully. Any dips in test results are followed up. Pupils' attitudes to learning are also monitored. The school reports regularly to parents.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning effectively. Sometimes, they work with groups of pupils; at other times, with individuals. They help younger children develop their speaking and listening skills by engaging them in meaningful conversation.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and are confident learners. They recognise the value of their education and the different learning opportunities they are given.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and that they learn how to keep themselves safe, for example online. They give examples of how the school keeps them safe, for example by teaching road safety and carrying out fire drills.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, but say this is very rare. They have confidence in the adults at the school to sort out any concerns they may have.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, describing it as a safe environment and praising staff for the level of care provided for pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and respectful, both of adults and of each other. They conduct themselves sensibly in lessons and at other times of the day. They say they enjoy the social times, such as lunchtime.
- Attendance for most pupils is above the national average. There are a few pupils who are often late or absent. The school follows up any unplanned absences in a timely manner.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment throughout the school is at least in line with, and sometimes well above, expectations for pupils' ages. The school checks this through the use of tests for English and mathematics that generate nationally recognised standardised scores.
- Pupils make good progress over time from their individual starting points. This is confirmed by work seen in pupils' English and mathematics books. However, this is less

evident in books for other subjects. Conversations with pupils indicate they make good gains in their learning in a range of subjects.

- Pupils read both confidently and competently. They answer questions about the text and have good comprehension skills. They say they enjoy reading and older pupils explained why they had chosen particular books to read. One pupil told an inspector: 'The books are better than the films; there's more detail.'
- Pupils are making good progress in phonics. Younger pupils are developing skills which will help them with more complex reading and writing challenges in the future.
- Standards in mathematics are not as strong as in English. For example, assessments indicate that pupils are less confident in their knowledge and understanding of shape and space.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is led effectively. The early years leader maintains a clear overview of the quality of provision and children's achievements. There are regular opportunities for staff to observe each other and discuss what is working well and how to improve further.
- Children are assessed on entry to the school and any gaps in skills and knowledge are quickly identified and addressed. Ongoing assessments are recorded for all areas of learning and these are regularly updated and monitored by the early years leader. These assessments have been moderated by the local authority and their accuracy has been verified.
- Most children achieve a good level of development by the end of the early years. Some children have competent reading and number skills for their age and exceed the early learning goals. As a result, children are well prepared to move into key stage 1.
- Children are well behaved and enjoy their learning. There are good relationships between the children and adults, and this helps children build their confidence as learners. Children learn and play safely. The early years staff have received training in paediatric first aid. Communication with parents is effective in ensuring that any minor concerns are quickly followed up and resolved.
- Within classrooms, there is a range of activities where children can develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in the different areas of learning. Adults support some activities, while children can access other activities independently. Outdoor provision is not as strong as that seen in classrooms and activities are sometimes less purposeful and not as focused. It is not easy for the Reception class to access these resources from their first-floor classroom and the outdoor space is, by necessity, shared by the rest of the school. However, staff ensure that children learn outdoors for a significant amount of time.

School details

Unique reference number	120329
DfE registration number	856/6003
Inspection number	10048631

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	92
Number of part-time pupils	15
Proprietor	Mr Francis Fernandes
Headteacher	Paul Hitchcock
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,155
Telephone number	01162 707414
Website	www.leicesterprep.co.uk
Email address	office@leicesterprep.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 April 2015

Information about this school

- Leicester Preparatory School is a co-educational, non-selective and non-denominational independent day school which was first established in 1886. It was previously called Stoneygate College. The school changed its name to Leicester Preparatory School in September 2011. It is located in the south of the city of Leicester.
- The school is privately owned by a proprietor who is a major shareholder in Consortium Leicester Ltd, which is a separate company from the school. The building is owned by the consortium.
- Pupils are drawn from the local area and reflect a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. There are two Nursery classes, one Reception class, one key stage 1 class and two key stage 2 classes. The headteacher is the class teacher for Years 5 and 6.

- The school regularly uses local amenities, such as squash courts and a swimming pool, for some aspects of the school curriculum.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes during the inspection and observed pupils at other times of the school day. One inspector accompanied pupils on an off-site visit to the squash courts.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the proprietor and members of staff. They also spoke informally with pupils and a number of parents.
- Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work alongside the headteacher and considered a range of assessment information relating to pupils' academic progress.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including policies, safeguarding records and the school's own evaluation of its performance.
- Inspectors also carried out activities to check the school's compliance with independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and also took into account 10 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jane Salt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Peter Stonier

Her Majesty's Inspector

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