

Excelsior College

Independent school light-touch inspection report

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Reporting inspector	James Henry

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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, 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.^{1, 2}

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on: the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils; and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Excelsior College is a small primary school located in the Selby Community Centre in Haringey, North London. It was established in 1989 by the present proprietor. The majority of pupils are of African-Caribbean or African British heritage and there are two children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are supported by government funding. The school admits boys and girls aged from four to 11 years of age and there are currently seven pupils on roll who all attend full time. There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. The school was last inspected in April 2010. The school has a wide range of objectives, based on ensuring that pupils receive a good 'all-round' education. The school also aims to encourage pupils to 'pursue knowledge and its acquisition with tenacity and for the purpose of fostering original thought and creating new ideas'. The school seeks to create an 'emotionally stable, disciplined and ordered environment'. The school's motto is 'We Must: We Will'.

Evaluation of the school

Excelsior College provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils and the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is also satisfactory. The quality of teaching and assessment and the curriculum are satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. The provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The staff are very committed to ensuring the school is a happy place and create an ethos that is a major factor in helping the school to successfully meet its aim of providing an all-round education for pupils through nurturing their personal development. As a result, pupils enjoy their education with the different ages mixing well together. The procedures for ensuring the safeguarding, health and welfare of pupils are satisfactory and the school meets all regulations.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and is flexible in meeting the needs of individual pupils. It is broad and balanced and based on the National Curriculum and places particular emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development. Opportunities are planned effectively to develop pupils' reading, writing and numeracy skills across different subjects. Different subjects are linked together using a thematic approach to help promote pupils' learning more effectively. For example, art, science and design and technology are covered when pupils make sculptures out of natural materials. A particular strength of the curriculum is that all pupils are taught French. Even the youngest pupils can count at least up to 10 and they can sing and understand the meaning of a few traditional French songs. The curriculum is enriched by trips, such as to the local science museum, and with visitors including the police and local fire officers. Often resources based on a visit are used to provide pupils with learning opportunities to develop their skills in different subjects. For example, following a visit by the local police, pupils developed their mathematical understanding of shape through studying road signs.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. There are some good elements in teaching and this enables pupils to make good progress in their personal, social and moral development and satisfactory progress academically. Due to small numbers, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are taught together in the same class. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they share the objectives of lessons with pupils to enable them to understand what they are expected to learn. Work is planned to meet the needs of the different ages of pupils and there is effective use of questioning to develop pupils' learning. Teachers recap on the purpose of lessons to check pupils' understanding. However, there are occasions when opportunities are missed to use pupils' responses to provide further challenge and increase the rate at which pupils learn. Resources to support teaching and learning are adequate and are often linked to national strategies used to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Classroom routines are well established and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their work and equipment. This helps to foster their independence. Due to careful nurturing and support, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and willingly participate in lessons.

The gathering of assessment information and the use of targets to ensure pupils achieve their full potential is satisfactory but underdeveloped. The school has a system in place to track pupils' progress using teacher assessments and nationally moderated tests. However, the process is not informed by the assessment of pupils' starting points. Therefore it is difficult for the school to judge precisely whether pupils are making good enough progress matched to their capabilities. This also limits the school's ability to set realistic but challenging targets for individual pupils and older children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These limitations contribute to pupils making satisfactory progress overall. Work in books is well marked with positive use of praise and pointers for improvement.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn to reflect and cooperate and to develop spiritual awareness through an informal approach to assemblies. For example, they were asked to vote on whether they wished to use musical instruments during singing in an assembly. Pupils quite naturally said a prayer before eating their lunch. The school has a positive ethos that promotes respect for others. Pupils learn about different cultures and are taught tolerance and understanding of others. As well as supporting charity fund raising events, pupils also visit a local senior citizens' centre to take part in activities such as singing during the Christmas season. Pupils' contribution to their school community is also being developed through working with the community centre in developing and designing a new outdoor play area. They are keen to help around school as shown by pupils' eagerness to be school captain for the day. The strong emphasis on promoting pupils' moral and social development results in pupils having a good understanding of right and wrong. Consequently, pupils of all ages work alongside each other showing consideration and care. Parents are very supportive and pupils are well prepared in their personal development for their future education. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as reflected in their good attendance and positive attitudes to school. Pupils' behaviour is good and they have formed excellent relationships with adults and each other. Pupils are helped to develop their awareness of keeping safe through visits by the local police and fire officers who talk about topics such as safety on the roads and being safe at home.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Due to the small numbers, staff know pupils well on an individual basis. Consequently, the school cares well for individual pupils and appropriate arrangements are in place to keep them safe on a daily basis. There are appropriate recruitment procedures in place which include checks on adults before they are employed by the school to make sure they are suitable to work with pupils and young children. All adults in the school have been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau and all checks are recorded on the schools' single central register. Staff are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils' well-being and have undertaken the appropriate child protection training at the required level. The school has a satisfactory child protection policy and procedures are understood by staff. There are good levels of supervision during the day and regular fire drills and risk assessments are carried out.

There is a positive commitment to promote healthy lifestyles. Pupils are encouraged to undertake physical exercise and they willingly take part in different physical activities at the beginning of the school day from skipping to bouncing on large rubber balls. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in swimming lessons once a week. They also learn about healthy eating and drinking and are encouraged to use the constant access to water during the school day. Staff eat lunch with the

pupils and help them understand the importance of healthy food as well as encouraging them to develop social dining skills.

The school is based in a local community centre and has an appropriate plan to increase over time the accessibility of the premises and the curriculum to disabled pupils. It fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children's communication skills are sound. Teachers actively promote children's language and reading and writing skills by providing effective opportunities for listening and talking with staff during play activities and more formal tasks such as producing a book about themselves. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to opportunities to develop their writing and reading skills. They are also given opportunities to develop investigation and numeracy skills. For example, when measuring their own height through making marks on a wall and then comparing them with others to see who is taller. This type of activity successfully helps children develop cooperative skills at an early age and, as a result, their social and emotional development is good. Relationships are good and children feel safe in school and have the confidence to approach staff if they have any concerns. As a result, children are well prepared in their personal skills for their entry to Year 1.

Staff make regular and ongoing assessments of children's progress using notes and photographs to provide evidence for the profile and this information is used satisfactorily to inform teaching. The lack of assessment of children's starting points limits the setting's ability to set completely accurate targets for older children.

Resources are used effectively. The school provides access to 'free flow' indoor and outdoor learning for children, using the outside area. There is an adequate range of bikes, sand and water play, chalk for drawing and flower beds with an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children also have access to computers that are used to engage them in their learning and develop their information, communication and technology skills.

Children are well cared for and settle quickly and clearly enjoy the level of independence and support that is promoted by the staff. However, while a member of the school has had first aid training this does not include paediatric first aid. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff work as a cohesive team and work effectively with parents to improve the provision and outcomes for children.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010.

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure that at least one person who has a current paediatric first-aid certificate is on the premises at all times when children are present and that there is at least one person on outings who has a current paediatric first-aid certificate.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- introduce a system to accurately assess pupils' starting points
- improve the school's tracking procedures by assessing children's abilities when they start school. Use the information to set realistic, challenging targets.

Inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Primary		
Date school opened	1989		
Age range of pupils	4–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 5	Total: 7
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 4,400		
Address of school	Selby Centre, Selby Road, Tottenham London, N17 8JN		
Telephone number	0208 365 1153		
Email address	gilfillian2@hotmail.com		
Headteacher	Mr Gareth Gilfillian		
Proprietor	Mr Gareth Gilfillian		