

Eastcourt Independent School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Nasim Butt

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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}

Information about the school

Eastcourt School is a long-established, selective independent school located in Ilford, Essex. The school was founded in 1896. The headteacher is also the proprietor and her family have owned the school since 1986. The school admits primary pupils between the ages of three and 11 years. There are currently 334 pupils on roll. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a morning and afternoon nursery and two full-time reception classes. The Stepping Stones nursery has 20 part-time children on roll. No children are in receipt of government funding. The vast majority of pupils are from Asian and African Caribbean heritages. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs and none are at the early stages of speaking English. The school aims 'to produce well-educated, caring, well-mannered individuals'. The school was last inspected in March 2008.

Evaluation of the school

Eastcourt Independent School provides a good quality of education and successfully meets its aims. Good teaching supported by a strong curriculum in Years 1 to 6 results in pupils making good progress overall and satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils' personal development and their behaviour are good; they leave the school as confident and articulate young people. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the Stepping Stones nursery, is satisfactory. The arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are good, including those for safeguarding. The school has made good progress since its last inspection and now meets all of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good overall and satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is suitably broad and balanced. Although it puts a strong emphasis on English and mathematics, the curriculum provides well for pupils' creative and sporting interests and development. In addition, the school offers a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities which promote pupils' personal development effectively. The strong emphasis on key skills in English and

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

mathematics and overall good teaching means that pupils make good progress in these subjects and achieve well. Pupils write for a range of purposes, especially narrative, and develop good mathematical skills. They develop into very confident readers and speakers. Schemes of work frequently identify opportunities to develop literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils studied Van Gogh's painting, 'The Starry Night', and produced a good quality descriptive piece of writing using figurative language. A range of exciting visits and outside speakers enrich the curriculum. For example, Year 3 pupils really enjoyed an outstanding interactive session about the structure and properties of rocks presented by a visiting scientist. Although there is an agreed format for all schemes of work, the quality varies between subjects; the best practice being found in English, mathematics, science and history. Nevertheless, all schemes of work are at least satisfactory.

French successfully enriches learning in Years 3 to 6. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used regularly to enhance the presentation of work and to develop pupils' literacy skills. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoyed the simulation of a newsroom activity in which they edited their newspaper report in response to periodic news flashes displayed on the whiteboard. There is a sound programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) supplemented by citizenship. Design and technology is incorporated through art, and the provision of music, dance and drama makes a further strong contribution to pupils' good personal development.

Teaching and assessment are good overall. Teachers form good relationships with pupils and this helps pupils to develop good attitudes to learning. Relationships are such that pupils confidently contribute ideas, listen to each other and respect others' views. Instructions to pupils are clear. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good individual support which quickly helps pupils overcome any difficulties. In lessons where learning is most effective, activities have good pace, are engaging and provide suitable challenge, allowing independent responses, but in some less effective lessons teachers miss opportunities to make the most of pupils' willingness to learn because tasks lack challenge. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, where teaching and children's progress are satisfactory, teaching sometimes does not address pupils' needs. However, most older pupils make good progress, especially in Years 4 to 6.

The school assesses older pupils with its own rigorous assessments, such as spelling tests and school examinations. The information gained provides a useful measure of pupils' progress. Older pupils are clear about how they are assessed and say that they like the traffic light system in use to assess their own progress. However, using this system, the setting of individual pupils' targets in literacy and numeracy is still at an early stage of development. Teachers regularly mark work and pupils find the comments helpful. The most helpful comments are in literacy and often suggest how pupils can improve further. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, useful assessment opportunities are missed which adversely affects the responsiveness of teaching to children's needs. Senior staff are aware that they can make even more use of

assessment information to help identify strengths and areas for further development in pupils' learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' consistently good behaviour makes a strong contribution to good learning. Provision helps to make the school a very orderly and respectful community and also supports the development of good attitudes to learning. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. Rules and expectations are clearly understood and are followed. There are many opportunities for pupils to excel because the range of activities provided by the curriculum is broad. Self-esteem is effectively developed in a number of ways. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to contribute in lessons and individual academic, creative and sporting performance is celebrated. Pupils are proud of their school. They get opportunities to have a representative role through drama productions, singing, playing musical instruments, entering competitions, and playing in sports teams.

Pupils regularly raise money for national and local charities. They welcome all of these opportunities to contribute to the local and wider community. During the inspection, children in the Reception Year and pupils in Years 1 and 2 donned colourful attire and rehearsed confidently and energetically for their end of year production at the local theatre. Older pupils can hold articulate conversations and express their views confidently. However, the school has not yet taken the opportunity to take advantage of this and channel this energy through the formal structure of a school council. Pupils' good attendance, impressive achievements in key skills and self-confidence contribute effectively to their future economic well-being and next steps in education.

Pupils successfully learn about other cultures and world religions through class discussions about current national and world affairs, assemblies, geography, religious education, and visiting places of worship. Through PSHE, pupils are developing a sound awareness of the key public services and institutions in England. Pupils from a range of different backgrounds get on very well with each other, resulting in strong community cohesion throughout the school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Pupils are well cared for. The school safeguards and promotes the welfare of all pupils effectively. Pupils thrive in the safe, nurturing environment. The school has devised and fully implements a wide range of policies, including those for anti-bullying, behaviour and health and safety on visits outside the school. All activities both in and outside school are carefully risk assessed. The safeguarding of pupils is good. There is a robust child protection policy, which is fully implemented. Well-organised supervision procedures ensure that pupils are safe at all times. The two designated members of staff responsible for

safeguarding are trained to a high level and all staff have received appropriate training. Fire safety procedures are rigorous. A sound risk assessment is in place; regular fire drills are carried out and these are formally recorded. All fire appliances are maintained regularly and appropriate fire signage is in place. There is monitoring of the fire risk assessment but outcomes are not always well documented. The first-aid policy meets requirements and all members of staff are appropriately trained in first aid, including those responsible for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise, for example, through a regular programme of physical education which includes games and dance. The school has devised a three-year accessibility plan which ensures it fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has checked the suitability of all staff and others who work with children and all of the required information is recorded in the single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation are safe and suitably support learning. Although some classrooms are relatively small, the space is managed well and is sufficient for the number of pupils in class. Circulation spaces such as stairways are slightly restricted, but adequate. Pupils' good behaviour around the school enables ease of movement. There are impressive displays of pupils' work in many classrooms, projecting the sense of a purposeful learning environment. The premises, including the kitchen, are clean and well maintained.

Provision of information

Through the prospectus, website and additional information, parents are kept well informed. All of the required information is provided, or made available, through these sources. Parents now receive a considerably improved annual report and have regular opportunities to meet with the staff. In addition, the outcomes of assessments conducted every six weeks are shared with parents.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaint procedures meet regulatory requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress across all six areas of learning. Children are happy to come to school and enjoy the activities organised by the adults. There is a secure and welcoming environment and children have adequate levels of attention from adults.

Provision is satisfactory. The nursery area and reception classroom provide adequate accommodation which is appropriately organised and has reasonable access to outside space. Opportunities for learning outdoors promote children's physical, creative and imaginative development and although this provision is satisfactory there are missed opportunities to use the area more frequently.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. In the good lessons, children make stronger progress, because activities are challenging, interesting and children work independently and find things out for themselves. Activities in one area of learning are linked well to others. In some lessons, however, such links are not made. In some child-initiated learning, teachers do not always link the activities closely enough to the objectives identified in the planning, restricting children's progress. In other lessons insufficient attention is sometimes given to identifying children's specific needs and adapting teaching accordingly. This also results in children making satisfactory rather than good progress.

There is useful ongoing assessment which identifies, in part, the next steps in children's learning. However, not all aspects of children's development are assessed, for example, when teaching elements of language and number. In consequence, this adversely affects the quality of teachers' planning.

The arrangements to provide care and welfare for pupils are good. Pupils learn effectively about safety and health during their various activities.

The setting is satisfactorily led and managed with good deployment of adults, satisfactory use of resources, and careful attention to the welfare and safety of the children. However, aspects of the provision including some lack of professional development for staff are limiting children's achievements. Self-evaluation is satisfactory; vision and desire for improvement are strong but reasonable objectives for improvement in all aspects of provision are not always wholly effective.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- in the school as a whole, ensure that all teachers make the best use of assessment information to plan for the full range of abilities in their classes.
- ensure that all child-initiated activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage are closely linked to the objectives identified in lesson planning so that children make good progress.

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	1896		
Age range of pupils	3–11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 161	Girls: 153	Total: 314
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 14	Girls: 6	Total: 20
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 5,310		
Address of school	1 Eastwood Road, Goodmayes Ilford, Essex IG3 8UW 020 8590 5472		
Telephone number			
Email address	admin@eastcourtschool.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Redgrave		
Proprietor	Eastcourt Independent School Limited		