

Prestwich Preparatory School and Friesner Nurseries

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Eileen Mulgrew HMI

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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}

The inspection of registered provision was conducted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

Prestwich Preparatory School is an independent co-educational primary school near Manchester which admits children from two to 11 years of age. Established in 1968, it developed from the first teaching nursery in Manchester. The school is based on two sites. The main building is Victorian and is leased from the local authority; it includes a nursery. There is an additional nursery department located on a site approximately half a mile from the main building. This operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm and opens for 51 weeks a year. Before- and after-school care is available on the school site and play schemes are run each holiday for pupils and their siblings. The school has 63 full-time pupils. There are 66 children who are aged three or under with 16 who attend full-time and 50 part-time. There are 43 children who are in receipt of funding for nursery education. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. There is a small proportion of pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language.

The educational philosophy of the school is to promote learning in five major skill areas: literacy, numeracy, reasoning ability, physical skills and social skills, through a focus on the 'three Rs'. A further aim is to foster a work ethic whereby all children are encouraged to develop self-motivation and academic interests. The school was previously inspected in September 2008.

Evaluation of the school

Prestwich Preparatory School is successful in meeting its aims and provides a good standard of education for all its pupils, including the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are well motivated and are eager to learn so they make good progress and achieve well. Through good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences, pupils develop well the personal qualities which equip them as future citizens. The promotion of pupils' welfare, health and safety is good and

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents.

safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The school has made improvements since the previous inspection and now meets all the regulations for registration as an independent school.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good and provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their academic knowledge and skills and their personal qualities. The planned curriculum is broad and balanced and provides thorough coverage of the key skills of literacy and numeracy; together with other activities, it is good in meeting the needs and interests of pupils. From an overarching curriculum policy there are schemes of work in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art, craft, personal social and health education (PSHE) and physical education. From these schemes of work are derived the shorter term plans which inform daily lessons. A good range of activities enhance the curriculum which motivate pupils such as growing vegetables, baking and a range of extra-curricular activities. The school makes satisfactory provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Since the previous inspection the school has invested in an interactive whiteboard in the hall and computers in all classrooms. Opportunities are provided for pupils to use computers to research independent projects. However, the school recognises that the use of ICT across the school is limited. Planning for the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage covers all of the six required areas of learning. Planning for provision on a daily basis is particularly detailed.

Teaching and assessment are good throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, as a result, pupils make good progress in their learning. Pupils' progress in speaking, listening, writing, reading and computation across the school is particularly good. Planned activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage engage children's interest and enjoyment. For example, children enthusiastically used the 'beebot' robot to answer number problems, taking turns and politely listening to each other. There is a good emphasis on developing children's phonic skills so that they quickly learn to read simple stories. Regular observations capture children's achievements which are recorded in the 'learning journals'.

The small number of pupils in each class results in teachers knowing the abilities of each pupil extremely well. As a result, teachers recognise where a pupil may be struggling and swiftly intervene to support good learning. Pupils comment on the small class sizes which lead to them receiving 'more attention' and immediate support and guidance to make good progress. The needs of pupils who are learning English as an additional language as well as those who may need additional learning support are met well.

The use of specialist teachers throughout the school for music and drama enhances the quality of those subjects for pupils. For example, in a drama lesson with Year 2 and Year 3, pupils made rapid progress as they explored the use of 'sound bites'; working as a team to recreate the sounds of an orange juice maker. They worked collaboratively and enthusiastically to present to the 'audience' and their efforts were

appreciated by their classmates. French is taught to junior pupils. Features of good teaching include excellent relationships and good subject knowledge, which lead to a positive climate for learning. Teachers use questioning techniques to encourage pupils to think. However, they do not always use the misconceptions reflected in pupils' answers to assess pupils' understanding of learning or deepen their thinking skills. Teachers pay good attention to ensuring equality in lessons, treating all pupils equally regardless of gender or background.

Pupils are assessed when they join Reception to ensure the planned activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum are well matched to their needs. Throughout the rest of the school a tracking system for speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics, introduced since the previous inspection, is used to record pupils' progress through the set objectives at half termly intervals. End-of-module assessments are completed in other subjects. This information is collected in an individual file and older pupils evaluate their own progress. Teachers use this information to group pupils based on ability so that their needs can be met. Pupils joining the school at other times are assessed to ensure activities meet their needs. The marking of pupils' work is mostly completed with the pupil so that guidance on the next steps can be given instantly. However, assessment processes are not used sufficiently robustly to enable pupils who work more quickly to be challenged further.

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire and those who spoke with the inspector consider their children are making progress. Several commented on the rapid progress their children have made since starting at the school. Most pupils consider they are well prepared for their future.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good including the personal development of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils can distinguish between right and wrong. Pupils are very welcoming to visitors, courteous and very polite. Their attitudes to school, each other and adults are very positive. As a result, the school is a harmonious community with pupils from a range of cultures playing and working well together. Pupils are proud of their school and keen to learn and succeed which contributes strongly to developing their self-esteem and confidence. They have ambitions to achieve highly and are confident that the school will support them to achieve their goals. Attendance and behaviour are good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy all the activities on offer; for example, the opportunity to learn to swim, to learn about journalism and to visit the pantomime. During the inspection the 16 pupils in the drama club confidently presented a song and dance routine with good performance skills and high quality singing.

Pupils have developed a good understanding of other cultures, religions and beliefs through assemblies and through the celebration of different festivals, such as Hanukkah and Ramadan. Pupils share their experiences of other cultures and parents and carers are invited to bring into school samples of food which reflect their culture during the school's open days. Pupils raise funds for good causes, for example, comic

relief and 'mediquip 4 kids'. Pupils enjoy contributing to the school community by taking on responsibilities such as monitors, prefects and house captains. Through class discussions pupils are invited to express their views on how the school can improve. The PSHE curriculum and educational visits ensure that they develop their knowledge of English institutions and services satisfactorily.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good throughout the school including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school provides a caring environment in which parents and carers feel their children are safe and cared for well. The school has all the required policies in place and up to date. Procedures for child protection are good and all staff, including the designated senior member of staff, are appropriately trained. Staff training in first aid is up to date and appropriate with most staff trained in paediatric first aid.

Almost all pupils say they feel safe and are looked after well by the staff. All say they are confident to talk to a member of staff if they have any concerns. They are confident that bullying does not occur but if it did, it would be dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles through the curriculum and healthy choices are available at lunch times. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The registered before- and after-school care, along with the provision for care during the school holidays provides appropriate activities, which interest the children involved; they are happy and well-behaved.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has suitable procedures in place for the recruitment of staff. All of the required checks, including Criminal Records Bureau checks, have been completed for those in regular contact with pupils. Records of these checks are kept in a single central record, which meets requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The main school occupies a Victorian building, which was formerly a local authority school. This comprises a hall, a range of suitable classrooms and a large, attractive room, which is used for the nursery. In addition, there is one prefabricated classroom at the rear of the building. The building is in a satisfactory decorative order and is very clean and tidy. Good displays of pupils' work enhance the learning environment. The classrooms are sufficiently spacious for the number of pupils. Two classes share the attractive classroom for the lower infant pupils and this works well. The school is adjacent to a very large public park, which is used extensively for sport, recreation and learning about the environment. The outdoor provision on both sites is suitable, including the outdoor play provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Provision of information

The school provides the required range of information through its prospectus, reports, school policies and newsletters. Annual reports for parents and carers have been improved. The school has a website, which is currently being updated. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a clearly written complaints procedure, which meets requirements.

Registered provision for children aged from birth to three years

The overall effectiveness and quality of provision for the children in both Early Years Foundation Stage settings are good. Despite recent turbulence at leadership level the provision is led well. Parents and carers are confident that their children will be well cared for and safe. As a result, children enter the nurseries on both sites happily and confidently; they settle quickly. Children, including those who are learning to speak English as an additional language, achieve well and make good progress in their learning and their personal, social and emotional development. Children show good attitudes to learning and play happily together.

Provision and outcomes are good. The learning environments in all areas of the nurseries, indoor and outside, are well-organised, attractive and reflect the six areas of learning for this age group. Staff have successfully ensured that the recent turbulence at leadership level has not affected the good quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good relationships result in a calm atmosphere with children busily involved in play-based activities. There is a good balance between adult-initiated activities and those children choose for themselves, including in the outdoor provision. Overarching curriculum plans ensure continuity and are bespoke to the needs of individual children. Learning journals capture the staff's good quality observations and provide an overall record of children's achievements. However, the recording of children's progress is inconsistent in the nursery provision remote from the main site. The welfare of children and the promotion of a safe environment are at the heart of the nursery's philosophy and ethos and as a result safeguarding practice and policy are of a good standard. Fire practices are regularly carried out.

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:

- develop the use of ICT across the school in all subjects
- use assessment processes more robustly to provide more effectively for pupils who work more quickly so they can be challenged further
- ensure teachers consistently use the misconceptions reflected in pupils' answers in lessons to assess pupils' understanding of their learning and deepen their thinking skills
- ensure the recording of children's progress is more consistent in the off-site nursery.

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 registered provision for children aged from birth to three years

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	Preparatory day school and nursery		
Date school opened	1968		
Age range of pupils	2-11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 32	Girls: 28	Total: 60
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 28	Girls: 22	Total: 50
Number of children aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 39	Girls: 27	Total: 66
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)	£4,416		
Annual fees (childcare)	£6,250		
Address of school	400 Bury Old Road Prestwich Manchester Lancashire M25 1PZ		
Telephone number	0161 773 1223		
Email address	enquiries@prestwichprepschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Miss Patricia Shiels		
Proprietor	Miss Patricia Shiels		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Prestwich Preparatory School and Friesner Nurseries,
Prestwich, M25 1PZ**

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. It was a pleasure to meet you and hear your views on Prestwich School. You told us you are proud of your school and enjoy all the activities planned for you. You also told us how you feel the school is helping you to achieve your ambitions. Most of your parents and carers agree, and are very pleased with the education you receive. Those of you who have recently joined the school told us how comfortable you feel and how you have settled into the school with the help of a friend to care for you.

You go to a good school where adults successfully prepare you for the future. You told us that your teachers explain things very well and always advise and guide you to improve your work. They even come into school early to help you with your homework if you get stuck! This is because your teachers know you as individuals and teach you well. You make good progress in your subjects and in your personal development. Your attendance is good; you behave well and get on well together.

In order to make your school even better, I have asked the headteacher to:

- develop the use of information and communication technology across the school in all subjects
- use assessment processes more robustly to enable those of you who work more quickly to be challenged further
- guide teachers to consistently use any misunderstanding reflected in your answers to check on your understanding and deepen your thinking skills.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Mulgrew
Her Majesty's Inspector