

Excelsior College

Selby Centre, Selby Road, Tottenham , London, N17 8JN

Inspection dates

11–13 March 2014

Overall effectiveness

Overall effectiveness	Adequate	3
Pupils' achievement	Adequate	3
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

This school is adequate because

- There is not enough good teaching to ensure that all pupils achieve well in all subjects.
- Work is not consistently well matched to pupils' ability to enable pupils to make good progress.
- Leaders' checks on the effectiveness of the learning in different subjects and of teaching are insufficiently rigorous, resulting in pupils making uneven progress, particularly in literacy and science.
- Self-evaluation is not precise enough.
- Assessment procedures and the use of targets, although adequate, are underdeveloped. Marking in books does not give pupils enough guidance on the next steps in their learning or how to improve.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are happy at the school, feel safe and behave well. Good personal development is underpinned by good spiritual and moral development.
- Aspects of the curriculum are good. Numeracy and French are presented in ways that offer pupils a rich learning experience.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed six lessons taught by four different teachers. The inspector looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, teaching staff and pupils. Documentation and policies, including those relating to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, were examined. Records of pupils' progress were examined.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers, as well as returns from staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Jonathan Yodaiken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this 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 and is registered for up to 20 pupils.
- The majority of pupils are of African-Caribbean or of African British heritage.
- The school admits boys and girls aged from four to 11 years of age and there are currently 10 pupils on roll, one of whom is in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All pupils attend full time and are taught together in one large classroom. There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. The school was last inspected in March 2011.
- The school has a wide range of objectives based on ensuring that pupils receive a good 'all-round' education. It 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'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of all teaching to be consistently good or better in order to raise achievement by:
 - ensuring there is a thorough initial assessment of children's skills when the children start in Reception
 - ensuring teachers provide feedback to pupils in the marking of their books with guidance on the next steps in their learning or pointers for improvement.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring the school's own assessment of how well it is doing is more precise, so that leaders have a greater understanding of areas to improve and take appropriate action to address them
 - making sure that rigorous checks are made on the quality of teaching and of learning in different subjects, especially of reading and writing, and implementing the new tracking system to chart progress across all subjects
 - improving the planning of work in different subjects to ensure there are no gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in English and science
 - considering ways to extend opportunities for pupils to participate in sport and exercise.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Adequate

Pupils' achievement is adequate overall; it is not good because pupils have made only made adequate progress in literacy and science. This is because teachers do not use information from assessments precisely enough in their planning and, as a result, activities are not always at the right level and do not consistently match pupils' needs.

Pupils join the school with varying skills and learning experiences. The lack of a thorough initial assessment means that teachers do not have a clear picture of children's competencies to inform their planning. As a result, children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is only adequate.

Pupils enjoy reading, but only make adequate progress. Although pupils are encouraged to reflect upon what they have read, there are no reading record systems in place to monitor progress and ensure that they are tackling increasingly demanding texts. The development of pupils' writing skills is patchy throughout the school. This is because pupils are not consistently guided in lessons or by comments in their books on the next steps in their learning.

The consistently good teaching of numeracy ensures that pupils make good progress in numeracy, particularly in calculation skills. This outcome is supported, for example, by a range of practical activities which are used to extend pupils' learning. Standards in scientific investigation are not high enough. Pupils often have the knowledge appropriate for their age, but are unable to apply their skills to scientific enquiry because teaching does not help pupils to develop these skills well enough. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are improving because pupils now make more frequent use of computers, for example within lessons.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. The school provides well for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that all pupils are valued as individuals. Staff are caring and attentive to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils state that they feel well cared for in school. Attendance is good as pupils enjoy school life. Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around school. They develop their confidence well, as demonstrated by the way they performed a puppet show in front of parents and carers and in their enthusiastic singing and piano playing. They demonstrate responsibility by acting as captains at lunchtime, when older pupils look after younger children. Pupils also play a productive part in the community by activities such as fundraising; for example, they grew parsley and set up a stall to sell it outside the school in order to raise money for charity. Pupils are encouraged to have time for reflection every day at lunchtime. They gain an understanding of what is right and wrong from school routines and practices and specifically from the topics they discuss in personal, social and health education lessons.

Tolerance and respect for all are taught as a basic tenet of the school's values and through interactions with visitors and members of the community. Pupils gain a good understanding of different cultures in humanities lessons. They learn about aspects of diverse British culture, as well as significant institutions and services in England. For example, they mark events such as the Queen's Jubilee and Remembrance Day, as well as learning about democracy, elections and the work of magistrates and the police force. Pupils learn about the legal system and public services through English and history lessons. When discussing current issues, such as elections, pupils are offered a balanced presentation of opposing political views.

Quality of teaching**Adequate**

The quality of teaching is adequate, with some good features, which results in pupils' adequate achievement overall. Due to small numbers, all pupils are taught in the same classroom, but they are grouped according to their ages. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and teachers often use questioning strategies well. Relationships with pupils are positive and teachers are generous with praise. With the exception of mathematics, the planning of learning is insufficiently detailed. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they are expected to learn and the activities planned are not always well matched to their different levels of ability. An example of this was an English lesson where pupils were preparing an advertising poster; it was only during the lesson that the teacher realised that the pupils had not understood the importance of the 'audience', and that their progress was slow as a consequence. Resources to support teaching and learning are adequate and computers are used frequently to support learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Classroom routines are well established and pupils have positive attitudes to learning and willingly participate.

The gathering of assessment information and the use of targets to ensure pupils achieve their full potential are adequate, but underdeveloped. The school has introduced a system to track pupils' progress. However, this has only been effectively implemented in mathematics. In addition, the school has no baseline assessment of pupils' starting points. This limits the ability of staff to set suitably challenging targets for pupils' progress. Work in books is marked frequently, with positive use of praise, but does not consistently provide suitable guidance on the next steps to take or pointers for improvement.

Quality of curriculum**Adequate**

The range of subjects taught is adequate and is flexible in meeting the needs of individual pupils. It is broad and balanced, is based on the National Curriculum, and places particular emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development. Although there is suitable long-term planning for all subjects, there is no medium-term planning which is effectively linked to weekly planning to ensure that there are no gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in the teaching of English and science.

Opportunities are planned to develop pupils' numeracy and literacy skills across different subjects. A good example of this was seen when a story was used effectively to consolidate multiplication skills. A particular strength is that all pupils are taught French: even the youngest pupils can count at least up to 10 and understand the meaning of a few traditional French songs. Occasional educational visits, for example to London Zoo, enrich pupils' learning. However, these tend to be unstructured and insufficiently linked to the learning goals in different subjects.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Adequate**

The quality of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is adequate and all of the independent school standards are met. Although the staff provide good day-to-day care, pupils' welfare, health and safety are adequate rather than good because of a small number of minor deficiencies which were quickly remedied.

Staff recruitment procedures are suitable and the results of checks on staff and others are correctly recorded in a single central register. The designated person responsible for safeguarding and all other staff have been trained to the required level.

The school has devised and implemented the required range of policies, which adequately meet the latest guidance. These include policies for child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and health and safety. Procedures are in place to record accidents and incidents and risk assessments are conducted as required. Checks on electrical appliances and procedures to prevent fire are implemented, including regular fire drills. A suitable policy for educational visits ensures that

appropriate steps are taken to keep pupils safe on school trips. Pupils are well supervised and the admission and attendance registers are properly maintained.

Effective policies are in place for promoting good behaviour and these are consistently applied by staff. Pupils indicated in discussion that behaviour is typically good and that bullying is rare, but if it does occur they are confident that staff deal with it well. Pupils say they feel safe. The school promotes healthy lifestyles, particularly healthy eating; however, opportunities to fully participate in sport and exercise, although adequate, are more limited.

Leadership and management

Adequate

The quality of leadership and management is adequate and ensures that pupils make adequate progress in their academic learning and good progress in their personal development. The proprietor ensures that all the regulations for independent schools are met.

Staff share a high level of commitment to academic excellence. However, self-evaluation of how well the school is doing is not precise enough and systems to hold staff to account for school performance are not sufficiently robust. As a result, the learning across subjects, the quality of teaching, levels of achievement and the provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety are only adequate.

A new tracking system, which charts pupils' progress, has been introduced and is beginning to make an impact in mathematics. However, this system needs to be applied across all subjects and to include an assessment of all pupils on entry to the school. Procedures for the improvement of teaching are not linked sufficiently to a systematic and formal approach to lesson observation, or to staff targets and areas for development. Nevertheless, teachers do feel well supported, as evidenced by staff questionnaires which are extremely positive. Staff feel proud to work in the school and value the support from leaders.

The school works well with parents and carers, who are mainly supportive of the work of the school, as demonstrated by the views of parents and carers expressed when visiting the school during the inspection. Parents and carers receive all the required information, including good quality termly reports on their child's progress, and they have regular opportunities to attend consultation meetings. The school's procedures for handling complaints are appropriate, clear and concise. The accommodation meets requirements and is a suitable and safe environment for learning.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	102174
Inspection number	439265
DfE registration number	309/6076

This inspection was carried out 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.

Type of school	Primary
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Gareth Gilfillian
Headteacher	Gareth Gilfillian
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,400 per annum
Telephone number	020 83651153
Fax number	None
Email address	gilfillian2@hotmail.com

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

