

# Gracefield Preparatory School

## Inspection dates

12–14 January 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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 good school

- The school is well led and managed by its senior leaders, who ensure that all of the independent school standards are consistently met, including those for the early years.
- Leaders set high expectations for staff and pupils and lead by example, creating a tolerant and respectful environment where pupils flourish.
- Good teaching and accurate assessment processes ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Leaders monitor teaching carefully, which contributes to pupils' good outcomes. Teachers know their pupils well and help them to improve in their work, setting high standards at all times.
- Pupils' personal development is strong. The school ensures that pupils are well looked after. Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe.
- In the early years class, children's personal development and welfare are good. All the required areas of learning and development are met well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching and the use of assessment are not yet sufficiently well developed to ensure outstanding outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders do not set, or follow up, precise targets for staff to enable teaching to become outstanding.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - all teaching staff use assessment information more consistently to plan lessons that challenge pupils in their learning and help them make more rapid progress
  - leaders set appropriate targets for teaching staff so that they understand how to improve their teaching to help pupils make even better progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school, including the early years, is well led and managed by the headteacher and the leadership team.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of, and ambition for, the school. They set high expectations for the personal development and academic achievement of pupils, including that of children in the Reception class.
- School leaders monitor teaching effectively and set targets, but the targets are not always clear enough, or followed up to make sure that the quality of teaching will improve further.
- The school's assessment procedures ensure that any underachievement is identified. Leaders regularly check the progress of all pupils to identify any pupils with difficulties. Teaching staff provide pupils with regular opportunities to review their work and to ask for help if they need it. Pupils' questions are responded to, enabling them to build on previous knowledge and make good progress.
- The broad and balanced curriculum is well planned. It includes a wide range of visits, trips and outings. These are linked to pupils' studies, enhancing their overall learning experience and their personal development.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' high standards of behaviour and their welfare, including their physical, mental and personal well-being and safety.
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils remain a priority, and pupils are safe. Arrangements for safeguarding are rigorous and meet all statutory requirements, including for the safe recruitment of staff. All procedures are carefully adhered to and all checks are recorded accurately on the school's single central register.
- The school has trained and appointed designated safeguarding leaders. All staff are suitably trained in safeguarding procedures. Leaders and staff take appropriate action to identify pupils who may be at risk.
- Leaders consistently promote fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is provided through regular well-planned and age-appropriate personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons. In addition, regular assemblies cover celebration of special calendar dates, and stories with a moral or a relevant topic to develop pupils' awareness and acceptance of others.
- Leaders protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism, and help them to stay safe in the use of information technologies. Staff are effectively trained in e-safety; they are vigilant and skilled at encouraging open discussion with pupils to ensure they remain safe.
- Parents have regular contact with staff to discuss any concerns and receive termly reports on the progress of their children.
- Parents' appreciation of the school's support for their children is evident in parental questionnaires.
- Staff questionnaires show that all staff enjoy working at the school and feel well supported.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Responsibility for governance of the school rests with the proprietors. They understand fully their duty of care and responsibilities. They support the school well to ensure that the academic achievement and safety of the pupils and children are a priority. The proprietors ensure that the school consistently promotes the personal and academic development of pupils within a culture of respect and tolerance so that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and the world beyond.
  - Regular staff meetings are held to ensure that the good quality of teaching and learning is sustained and that the school is always seeking to improve quality. Teaching staff are well supported in their work to enable pupils to make good progress in their learning, alongside their personal and social development.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The proprietor/headteacher has created a safeguarding culture through the effective training of staff and implementation of clear policies and procedures. Procedures are rigorously adhered to so that all staff understand and know how to respond in the event of any concerns, ensuring that pupils are well supported and safe.
- All of the independent school standards are met.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and achievement so that pupils focus well and make good progress in their learning.
- There is an expectation that pupils take responsibility for their learning and written work; pupils take great pride and care in the presentation of their work. They extend their learning through exploration of a topic, for example in their own reading, or investigating through research in the school library. These approaches help develop their knowledge and their curiosity.
- In lessons, teachers effectively develop and consolidate pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. They give sufficient time for pupils to review what they are learning. They listen readily to pupils' questions to build confidence and to ensure that pupils understand and know what is expected of them.
- Teachers identify and support pupils effectively if any start to fall behind, and intervene quickly to help them to improve their learning. Pupils who arrive mid term and who are well behind expected levels are given good support to move on in their learning.
- Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to challenge pupils' thinking and reasoning by planning interesting lessons. They use questioning skilfully to probe pupils' responses, ensuring that new ideas and concepts are better understood. They encourage pupils to think for themselves and to discuss their learning together.
- Pupils make good use of the feedback they receive from their teachers to address what they need to do to improve and to ask for help if required.
- The homework set by teachers, in line with the school's policy, is appropriate for pupils' ages and their differing stages of academic development. This consolidates learning and prepares pupils well for work to come.
- Teachers develop pupils' reading, writing and communication skills well, in addition to their competences with mathematics, across the curriculum. Pupils are given good opportunities to reinforce their learning and increase their knowledge and understanding of spellings, mental arithmetic and times tables. Through regular extra-curricular activities, for example the Year 3 and Year 4 trip to Carleon for their topic on the Romans, and attendance at after-school clubs, pupils enjoy additional, valuable opportunities to learn new skills and to build confidence and self-esteem.
- Teachers expect and encourage all pupils to work with a clear focus and positive attitudes. This was evident in all lessons seen, with high standards of behaviour and conduct.
- Teachers know their pupils well. Through careful checking and regular assessment they ensure that all pupils know what they need to learn next, and how to focus on building on their previous knowledge. However, teachers do not always use assessment to set appropriately challenging tasks for different ability groups.
- Teaching ensures that pupils have plentiful opportunities to learn through play and to develop excellent social, physical and creative skills.
- Teachers encourage pupils to listen to each other as well as giving them good opportunities to express themselves.
- The school gives parents accurate information about how well their child is progressing, how well they are doing in relation to the standards expected, and what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers quickly and constantly challenge any use of stereotypes or derogatory language, whether in lessons or around the school. Teachers promote equality of opportunity and diversity at all times and set an excellent example in their conduct as a staff.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They take pride in their work, their school and their appearance.
- Pupils' attitudes to all aspects of their learning are consistently positive. These positive attitudes have a good impact on the progress they make and the nurturing atmosphere and harmonious relationships in the school.
- Pupils are receptive to different ideas and views, listen considerately to each other and interact well. They are always punctual and well prepared for lessons.

- Pupils value their education; there is little absence. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance.
- Pupils' consistently good conduct reflects the school's efforts to promote high standards at all times.
- Parents, staff and pupils have not raised any concerns about personal development, behaviour and welfare. Parents report in questionnaires that they are highly satisfied with the school's expectations and high standards for their children.
- The school's open culture promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Pupils are safe and report that they feel safe. They have good opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. They enjoy learning about how to stay healthy, and they are aware of emotional and mental health, personal safety and the value of positive relationships. They know how to prevent misuse of technology.
- Pupils' impressive spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures they are prepared to be reflective about and responsible for their actions as good citizens.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils respond well to the example of staff and the high expectations that are set for them. Any slight indication of unacceptable behaviour is swiftly acted upon by staff before it is allowed to develop further.
- Pupils look after each other well and include others when out playing. Any new pupils to the school are welcomed and included quickly by pupils so that they settle quickly into school life and feel accepted.
- The school is a positive community and an orderly environment. Pupils respond quickly to instructions and requests from staff, allowing lessons to flow smoothly and without interruption. Low-level disruption is rare.
- Pupils listen to and respect staff well, and when told off for using derogatory or aggressive language they respond accordingly and learn from their mistakes. Pupils benefit from learning within an environment where they are understood.
- Senior leaders and teaching staff work with pupils to help amend any unacceptable behaviour patterns so that pupils abandon any bad habits and respond positively.
- Pupils report that occurrences of bullying are rare and that teachers respond swiftly if any bullying is reported. Pupils are quite prepared to work with the school to tackle and prevent the rare occurrences of bullying, and encourage each other not to use any bullying language or to offend each other.
- Good behaviour, respect and tolerance for others are the hallmark of this school and, as a result, pupils can be themselves and develop well emotionally. Those who have suffered previously from bullying find a haven where they are accepted and can begin to learn and progress well because they are free from emotional turmoil and fear.

## Outcomes for pupils

**are good**

- Pupils make consistently strong progress across year groups and in a wide range of subjects, including in English and mathematics. They develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills from their different starting points. The strong focus on learning and achieving well ensures pupils are developing effective skills in all areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils achieve well. Teaching staff use praise effectively to encourage pupils to strive further. They develop good reading, writing and speaking skills, take responsibility and show initiative. Pupils work well with each other, sharing ideas and discussing what they think will happen, in science or in mathematics, for example.
- Those who join the school with levels of attainment below those typical for their age settle well. They quickly begin to make progress through the effective identifying of their learning needs and good support from experienced staff.
- The needs of pupils who have English as an additional language are identified well, and appropriate additional support helps them to make good progress in learning the language.
- Pupils develop good creative and aesthetic skills through art, drama and music, and through taking part in regular school performances.
- The learning difficulties of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are carefully identified. Good support enables them to make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age. Reading for

homework and visits to the school library ensure pupils are developing good reading habits.

- From different starting points, the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in English and in mathematics are close to or above national figures. The progress of the small number of pupils with special learning needs is consistently improving in relation to their peers.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Almost all pupils achieve a place at the school of their first choice and a good number receive scholarships to competitive independent schools.

## Early years provision

## is good

- The early years provision is well led and managed by senior leaders. They support the teaching staff in the Reception class well so that the personal development and welfare of children is strong and children are safe. Regular meetings between senior and teaching staff ensure good communication and up-to-date knowledge of all current good practice guidance and requirements. Staff have appropriate training and receive updates when required.
- Safeguarding procedures for the welfare and safety of the children are rigorous and meet statutory requirements. Staff are appropriately trained in reporting and recording any concerns, and are well supported by senior staff who work closely with them. The welfare of the children is closely monitored to ensure children are safe and feel safe.
- All required checks are carried out for staff and are recorded appropriately.
- The quality of teaching is good. It provides an imaginative environment for children through well-organised activities, both planned and child-initiated, and play. Planning includes outdoor play and regular physical education with a range of activities for the children's physical development.
- Children make good progress from their starting points. The majority of children join the Reception class with levels of ability typical for their age. Accurate assessment and ongoing monitoring ensure that appropriate targets are set for each child. All of the children have made typical or better progress from their starting points.
- Through the use of songs, music and the teaching of basic sounds, letters and numbers, children begin to learn and progress well. Many children already recognise most letters and words and are beginning to read. Teaching ensures that their basic number and counting skills extend to all areas of their learning and play.
- Teaching staff know the children well and set appropriate activities and challenges based on accurate assessment and ongoing checks on their progress and achievements.
- Regular assessments and effective checks ensure that, should any child require specialist help, there is opportunity for early intervention. The school has the appropriate contact with outside agencies for any required support together with regular contact with parents.
- Those who speak English as an additional language make good progress and are well supported by staff. Teachers' clear explanations and instructions help the children to integrate well and quickly acquire good language skills.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs are given good support to ensure they make at least expected progress, or better. Effective planning by teaching staff ensures that teaching assistants are well used to support children in their learning.
- Children's good behaviour demonstrates that they feel secure at school. They interact and work well with each other and with teaching staff. They ask questions, for example at story time, and demonstrate a confident grasp of language and an ability to listen well to each other. They are inquisitive learners, able to reflect and to make connections between reality and fantasy in a story.
- They play and interact happily within a relaxed and bright space, which is well resourced for creative and imaginative role play and the development of skills.
- The school works closely with parents to ensure that relevant information between school and home is shared to ensure the well-being and safety of all children.
- The proprietors have an accurate understanding of the early years setting and monitor the provision well. They provide a bright and stimulating environment. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced; they have regular training opportunities to ensure they are well prepared in all aspects of their work.
- The school's nurturing environment stimulates the development of children's personal and social skills.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109343
<b>Inspection number</b>	10006064
<b>DfE registration number</b>	801/6009

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Day
<b>School status</b>	Independent
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	77
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Ivan Morgan and Mrs Elizabeth Morgan
<b>Chair</b>	N/A
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Elizabeth Morgan
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£4,884
<b>Telephone number</b>	0117 956 7977
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.gracefieldschool.co.uk">www.gracefieldschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@gracefieldschool.co.uk">enquiries@gracefieldschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18–19 September 2012

## Information about this school

- Gracefield is an independent primary school for girls and boys aged from four to 11 years.
- Situated in Fishponds in the east of the city of Bristol, the school occupies a detached Victorian house.
- The school opened in 1950 and is registered for 112 pupils.
- The school's aims are to 'prepare each child for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life'.
- Currently there are 77 pupils on roll. This includes 16 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- No pupil attends part time.
- The school is currently organised into seven classes, one for each year group.
- Eight pupils have been identified as being disabled or having special educational needs. No pupil has an education, health and care plan. No children are looked after. Six pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proprietor has responsibility for the governance of the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 16 lessons, examined pupils' work, teachers' planning and information about pupils' progress.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor, senior leaders and teaching staff, and discussions were held with pupils.
- School policies and other documentation, including for behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, were examined to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspectors took account of 16 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors took account of 38 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Flora Bean, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Roger Garrett	Ofsted Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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