

Streatham Schools

Victoria Road West, Blundellsands, Liverpool, Merseyside L23 8UQ

Inspection dates

24–26 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that the progress made by pupils is carefully monitored and tracked.
- Outcomes require improvement as most pupils make steady, rather than good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have a limited understanding of the quality of teaching and teachers are not held accountable for the progress made by pupils.
- Leadership structures do not create clear lines of accountability for different areas of the school's performance.
- Teachers do not do enough to develop pupils' writing skills in different subjects.
- The training that teachers receive does not help them to improve their teaching and there are few opportunities for members of staff to share ideas about the most effective ways to teach.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils, including the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are not high enough.
- Teachers do not routinely provide high levels of challenge in lessons.
- Teachers' planning does not sufficiently consider the starting points of different pupils.
- Teachers' questioning does not challenge pupils and deepen their understanding.

The school has the following strengths

- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards.
- Leaders have created a welcoming, caring and inclusive ethos.
- Pupils behave very well. They are mature and considerate of others.
- Pupils are very happy and benefit from high levels of individual pastoral support.
- Pupils profit from an extensive range of opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Children in the early years make quick progress in their learning.

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?

- Develop the leadership and management of the school by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching is closely monitored to improve leaders' understanding of how to further improve teaching
 - systems for managing the performance of teachers are refined to make teachers more accountable for the progress made by pupils
 - a systematic plan is introduced for improving pupils' writing across the curriculum
 - leadership structures create clear lines of accountability for different areas of the school's performance
 - systems are introduced to carefully track the progress made by pupils throughout the school
 - more frequent opportunities are sought to share good practice and ideas about teaching.
- Improve the quality of teaching and thereby outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils, including the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, can achieve
 - teachers' planning consistently challenges pupils to make rapid progress
 - teachers use questioning skilfully to probe pupils' understanding and deepen their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching throughout the school is good. Leaders have not monitored the quality of teaching thoroughly. As a result, they lack detailed knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. Leaders have an over-generous view of the quality of teaching, based on insecure evidence, and this has prevented them from taking more decisive action to tackle areas of weakness.
- Leaders at the school, particularly the headteacher, fulfil many different roles and have many demands on their time. The school improvement plan lacks the necessary precision to drive improvements across the school with an appropriate sense of urgency. Current leadership structures do not create clear accountability for all key areas of the school's work. As a result, there is significant variation in the quality of the school's work in different areas. Pastoral leadership, for example, is clearly a strength, whereas the leadership of teaching is much weaker.
- Leaders have not carefully tracked the progress made by pupils. As a result, they lack clear understanding of how well pupils achieve at the school. Leaders have not held teachers to account for the progress made by pupils and there is an insufficiently sharp focus on ensuring that pupils make good or better progress.
- Teachers benefit from a range of training opportunities to improve their safeguarding practice and ability to cater for pupils who have particular special educational needs and/or disabilities. Training for staff has not focused on areas that would improve general standards of teaching. For example, leaders have not sought opportunities to share ideas on teaching with other schools.
- Leaders have not focused on developing pupils' writing across the curriculum. As a consequence, standards of pupils' writing throughout the school are not as high as they could be. Pupils read fluently and often. Their skills in reading are much better developed than those in writing.
- During the inspection, leaders made several changes to the school's website and improved provision to meet pupils' medical needs. These adaptations enabled the school to meet the independent school standards.
- The headteacher and other leaders have maintained high levels of staff morale during some very turbulent times in recent years. Responses to the staff survey clearly indicate that teachers are motivated and feel well supported. Responses to the inspection survey also reflect parents' appreciation of the school's strengths. Parents who responded were very complimentary about how happy and well looked after their children are.
- Impressively, leaders have managed to maintain the highly supportive and nurturing school ethos during a period of uncertainty and instability. One pupil commented that the school was 'like a big family'. A high proportion of pupils have had negative experiences at other schools and many pupils and parents feel that the support provided by the school community has been instrumental in causing an upturn in their fortunes. One parent, for example, described the school as a 'breath of fresh air'.
- A carefully planned, broad and balanced curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Staff are deployed creatively across the school to enable pupils to access a broad range of

subjects. Pupils also benefit from a range of extra-curricular opportunities that enrich and extend their learning beyond the classroom. Pupils of all ages choose to participate in clubs such as 'Brilliant Books', cookery classes and gymnastics.

- Leaders have ensured that there is a sustained focus on developing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of pupils. During the inspection, pupils were preparing to celebrate Chinese New Year and pupils from a very young age were able to explain the significance of different aspects of traditional Chinese celebrations. During an assembly about Rosa Parks, pupils of all ages considered the ethics of racial discrimination. Pupils were also supported to reflect on their own lives and set personal targets that would enable them to make a positive contribution to society.
- Pupils are supported to develop a secure appreciation of fundamental British values. The school council is open and inclusive in its work. Leaders have created a culture where pupils are very involved in making decisions about how the school is run. As a result, pupils have a particularly clear understanding of the principles underpinning democracy and the rule of law. Opportunities such as these complement the school's core values and prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Governance

- The proprietor has established an advisory body that provides valuable strategic support for the school directors. This body comprises individuals who have an appropriate range of expertise to support the business side of school management. In particular, leaders are well supported on legal and financial matters. The membership of this body does not include sufficient educational expertise and this is something the school is seeking to improve.
- Members of this body have an understanding of some aspects of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have also played an important role in protecting the school's ethos during a period of instability. They have not, however, held leaders to account for the academic performance of the school. Furthermore, they have not challenged leaders to present them with detailed and accurate information about the quality of teaching or the progress being made by pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Members of staff know the pupils exceptionally well and they are very sensitive to any signs of abuse or neglect. Staff receive thorough and regular safeguarding training and they are all well versed in the school's procedures for reporting concerns. Safeguarding records are meticulous and the school liaises effectively with a range of external agencies, such as the police, the fire service and the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Pupils receive thorough advice on how to keep themselves safe. They are particularly well supported to keep themselves safe online and when using social media. Parents also receive valuable information at parents' evenings about how to keep their children safe when online. The school's safeguarding policy is published on its website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of teaching has not been good.
- While teachers know their pupils very well, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high, particularly for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers' planning does not routinely ensure high levels of challenge, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in different ways. As a result, pupils' recall of previous learning is often not secure. Pupils clearly benefit from high levels of pastoral support within very small classes, but teachers do not consistently match activities to the needs of all pupils to ensure that pupils make rapid progress.
- Teachers do not consistently use questioning to deepen and consolidate pupils' learning. The feedback they provide to pupils on their written work often does not follow the school's policy and does not routinely provide pupils with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. Pupils are given few opportunities to review their work and reflect upon their learning. Teachers set homework for pupils, particularly in the senior school, in an unsystematic way that does little to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.
- The teaching of writing across the school lacks rigour, particularly in relation to the development of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar. While pupils are expected to write regularly and at length, teachers do not consistently do enough to improve the fluency and technical accuracy of their writing. In contrast, there is a much more effective approach to improving pupils' reading.
- Teachers are very encouraging of all pupils and have a clear understanding of how much progress each pupil is making. Pupils appreciate the personalised support they are given by their teachers and they approach their studies with very positive attitudes. This ensures that no time is wasted in lessons and the focus on learning is purposeful and sustained.
- The frequency and effectiveness of assessment varies across the school, with the most regular and robust assessment taking place in Years 10 and 11. Teachers formally assess all pupils twice a year, and this enables teachers to have an accurate view of the progress being made. Parents receive written reports twice a year that clearly identify current levels of attainment and a range of other useful information.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers attach a high priority to ensuring pupils' emotional well-being. Many pupils join the school after finding it difficult to adjust to life in other schools and members of staff create a welcoming and nurturing environment. Pupils rapidly gain confidence while at the school. One ex-pupil told the inspector how much she had come to believe in herself as a direct result of the school's work, which is epitomised in its pledge to create a 'caring and sharing' experience for pupils.

- Pupils feel very safe at the school and the school's work to support pupils to develop an understanding of risk is thorough. Pupils benefit from advice and guidance provided by a range of external speakers from services such as the fire brigade and police. Pupils are also given very precise advice on how to keep safe online and the school's filtering system effectively reduces such risks while pupils are in school.
- Pupils respond positively to the 'family' ethos that permeates all aspects of school life. They cooperate exceptionally well with pupils from all year groups and the older pupils act as positive role models for those lower down the school.
- All pupils spoken to commented that bullying is extremely rare at the school and most could not recall an incident of bullying. Despite this, pupils said they have every confidence that bullying, should it occur, would be dealt with fairly and decisively by members of staff.
- Pupils are keen to get involved in the many charity and community events arranged by the school. For example, pupils have recently rallied to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Research and for victims of the Ebola crisis. Community events, such as the annual pensioners' party, provide pupils with opportunities to develop their leadership and organisational skills while instilling within them a strong sense of social responsibility.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and any misbehaviour is rare. Most pupils work conscientiously and take pride in their work. Some pupils are not as keen to succeed in their studies as others and this can cause them to lack determination and perseverance in some areas of their learning.
- The school is very orderly and pupils' behaviour at social times is very good. Pupils are thoughtful and considerate of others at all times, including before school and during after-school clubs.
- Leaders have ensured that there are clear systems in place for dealing with rare incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils have a good understanding of the systems for dealing with poor classroom behaviour. On the rare occasions when there is misbehaviour, members of staff attach a high priority to enlisting the support of parents to help deal with behavioural issues.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the rapidly improving rates of attendance across the school. Overall attendance figures are currently above the national average. This is particularly impressive given the historic poor attendance of some pupils. Pupils arrive promptly to lessons and the majority arrive to school on time. A few pupils are frequently late to arrive at school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils arrive at the school with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make steady progress and leave with outcomes that are broadly in line with national averages.
- Pupils make steady progress over time. Rates of progress are similar in the preparatory and senior schools, although pupils make quicker gains in their learning in Years 10 and 11. Rates of progress are not consistently strong throughout all years and across different subjects because teaching requires improvement.
- Leaders do not ensure that the progress made by pupils is closely monitored and tracked throughout the school. Leaders' knowledge of pupil progress is therefore weak and this prevents a more systematic and thorough approach to raising achievement.
- Year 11 pupils' attainment has been broadly average in recent years. Leaders have not accurately measured how much progress this represents, although a comparison between actual GCSE results and predicted results based upon a series of tests completed by pupils indicates that progress was a little slower than national averages.
- No pupils are formally identified as disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Baseline assessments completed by these pupils indicate that their abilities are generally typical for their age. Despite this, many of these pupils make progress that is slower than other pupils.
- Due to high rates of mobility, many pupils join the school mid-year and during the different key stages. These pupils make progress at rates that are broadly similar to other pupils at the school and some of the highest attaining pupils have joined the school during the senior phase.
- Pupils in the senior school benefit from a programme of activities that develop their understanding of different careers. Pupils welcome a range of external speakers from different professions and places of further and higher education. As a result, pupils make informed decisions about their next steps and all pupils leaving the school advance to appropriate destinations.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership and management of the early years are good. The early years teachers have a clear understanding of the strengths of the provision and priorities for development. They have created a good provision with relatively limited resources.
- Children make good progress during their time in the early years. Teachers work with nursery schools and parents to baseline children's abilities. Almost all children are well prepared for Year 1 and transition into the preparatory school is carefully managed.
- Children are happy, settled and sociable. They become engrossed as they learn through play and they enjoy interacting with their peers. Children concentrate well during formal teacher-led phases of lessons and enjoy learning phonics and developing their handwriting.
- Teachers have developed an environment that engages children in different areas of

learning. Children make decisions about their learning and they develop their language skills by conversing with adults and each other about their learning and play.

- Adults are friendly, calm and attentive. They know the children extremely well and focus on helping them to achieve a range of personalised targets. All children receive regular and intensive one-to-one support and regular assessment helps teachers to adapt plans for future learning to ensure that all children are challenged.
- Children behave very well in the early years. They are secure with the clear routines within the classroom. They share well with other children and are good at taking turns and listening to others.
- The early years provision meets all of the relevant independent school standards and there are no breaches of the statutory welfare requirements.
- Adults have established positive relationships with parents. Despite this, teachers acknowledge that more could be done to involve parents in their children's learning.

School details

Unique reference number	104966
DfE registration number	343/6001
Inspection number	10020917

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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Linda White
Chair	Dr Michael Flynn
Headteacher	Linda White
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,190 to £5,400
Telephone number	0151 924 1514
Website	www.streathamschools.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@streathamschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–3 October 2013

Information about this school

- Streatham Schools opened in 1925. The school was originally a preparatory day school with boarding provision.
- The school is registered as an independent school for up to 200 boys and girls aged from four to 16 years.
- There are currently 62 pupils on roll, including five pupils in the early years.
- The number of pupils on roll fluctuates from year to year. At the time of the last inspection there were 90 pupils on roll.

- The school shares the building, grounds, offices and kitchen with a separate Nursery.
- Since the last inspection in 2013 the school has made an unsuccessful application to become a free school.
- The school is non-selective and is run by a not-for-profit company which was established by the staff in 2013.
- Boys were admitted to the senior school in 2013 and, since that time, the proportion of boys has continued to grow.
- Pupils join the school in all different year groups and many join during the academic year.
- The school runs a club offering to care for children after school.
- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- There is currently one pupil attending off-site provision.
- No disadvantaged pupils attend the school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the school.
- The inspector toured the school site accompanied by the headteacher and business manager.
- Observations were made of pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the day, at breaktimes and in lessons. The inspector also observed whole-school assemblies.
- Meetings were held with leaders, staff, pupils, ex-pupils and members of the governing body.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and looked at work in their books and on display.
- A number of documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation of its own performance and the school development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also reviewed.
- The inspector took account of 11 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire. The views of 24 staff who completed the questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Will Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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