

Drive Preparatory School

101 The Drive, Hove, East Sussex BN3 6GE

Inspection dates

28–30 June 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' monitoring does not concentrate sufficiently on pupils' progress. Schemes of work are limited so that teaching lacks focus. Development planning is informal and there is no systematic process for appraising staff.
- Leadership and management is narrowly focused on pupils' pastoral rather than academic development. The proprietor does not hold leaders sufficiently to account for all aspects of the school's performance.
- Attainment and progress is variable but generally below national averages. Attainment and progress information is not used sufficiently to plan lessons and check pupil progress or trends. School performance is not benchmarked with other schools or national data. Attendance patterns are not analysed.
- Pupils' work is not always challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils. As a result, some pupils do not secure the standards they can achieve.
- Work in pupils' books shows a variation in the quality of presentation, level of challenge and the amount of work achieved over time.
- Teaching and learning are variable. Strong subject knowledge and supportive relationships help some pupils make good progress. However, some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils, especially the most able, can achieve.
- The quality of teachers' feedback on pupils' work is inconsistent with the marking policy. Pupils are not always clear what to do next.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, supported by the proprietor, has ensured that all independent school standards are met. Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Pupils' safety and welfare are a priority for the school. Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is developed well through the supportive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and citizenship programmes.
- The curriculum is broad and varied. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities on offer. These make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and social skills.
- The school is ambitious for all of its pupils. They are well prepared for the next stage of education and have high aspirations for their future.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent Schools 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, learning and assessment to raise pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - teaching is consistently good or better across all years and all subjects, and that existing good practice is shared across the school
 - activities are more challenging and better matched to the individual needs of pupils, particularly the most able pupils
 - better use is made of available information to plan lessons that support and challenge all pupils in all subjects
 - pupils' presentation skills are encouraged and supported across the school in all subjects
 - there is greater consistency in the advice and feedback offered to pupils about how to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management of the school by ensuring that:
 - available information is used to identify pupil attainment and progress, which is benchmarked with similar schools and national benchmarks to check performance and trends over time
 - monitoring is rigorously undertaken to support self-evaluation, inform action planning, improve staff development, raise attendance and enhance the quality of the schemes of work
 - the proprietor provides greater challenge and support to the senior leadership team.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet done enough to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as pupils' academic outcomes, are good. Available information is not used sufficiently to identify progress for individuals or groups. Leaders do not compare outcomes with similar schools or national data.
- While leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school, there is no formal procedure for development planning. Furthermore, there is no systematic process for appraising staff, and the headteacher does not have sufficient time to undertake all her roles and responsibilities.
- However, the welfare and safety of pupils are given the highest priority. Pupils confirm that they feel safe. Safeguarding procedures are regularly reviewed. Risk assessments are thorough and robust. Staff morale is high. The school has an ethos of collaborative working among staff, purposeful relationships with pupils and supportive interactions with parents. Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The school follows the national curriculum. It is well planned to develop pupils' social skills through sessions covering well-being, mental health and sex education as well as discussions about social media and e-safety. Pupils learn to understand the importance of equality so that discrimination of any kind is vigorously challenged.
- There is an extensive extra-curricular programme, including sporting activities as well as clubs for art, drama, languages and public speaking. Enrichment activities include theatre trips, art workshops, geography field trips and visiting speakers. These pursuits make a strong contribution to pupils' ability to socialise and work together.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well across the curriculum and over time through religious celebrations and visits to places of worship. Pupils are also involved in debates and discussions such as differences of faith, ethnicity, disability, gender and sexuality.
- British values are promoted through the PSHE and citizenship programme which includes topics such as the school council, mock elections and debating sessions. Pupils are encouraged to undertake community work such as visiting nursing homes. The school benefits from the active involvement of the school-police liaison officer.
- The website has a comprehensive complaints policy and the documentation sets out clear timescales and procedures.

Governance

- The proprietor is responsible for the governance of the school. He is very involved in the school and visits regularly. External consultants have been employed to identify good practice, but the breadth and effectiveness of their support is not fully established so the impact is limited.
- The proprietor meets regularly with school leaders but does not hold them sufficiently to account for all aspects of the school's performance. There is currently no formal procedure in place to review the headteacher's performance. All statutory requirements

for the school are being met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school complies with all of the elements of the independent school standards regarding the safety of pupils, including publishing a safeguarding policy which is on the school's website. The policy is regularly reviewed to ensure that the school meets statutory requirements in line with guidance from the Secretary of State.
- The school's designated safeguarding lead and a deputy designated safeguarding lead are trained to an appropriate level. All staff have received up-to-date training on the latest guidance and requirements. Statutory safeguarding requirements are followed through, and the security of pupils is a priority.
- All the required arrangements for staff vetting and checking are in place and rigorously pursued. There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Staff know the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns raised. There are sufficient staff trained in first aid, and the medical room meets requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement as there is too much variability across the school. Teaching has not ensured that all pupils, especially the most able, make sufficient progress given their starting points. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils, especially the most able, can achieve.
- Staff turnover, and schemes of work which are limited, mean that teaching within and across subjects is inconsistent and some is typified by repetition of basic work. Personalised work is often provided but this work lacks challenge and some pupils spend too much time doing too little. Books were often untidy, with much unfinished and incomplete work.
- Feedback to pupils varies across the school. There are examples of strong practice in written and verbal feedback which supports pupils to consolidate and deepen their learning. However, in other lessons, pupils receive little or no feedback about how to improve, as required by the school's marking policy.
- The strong and supportive relationships that exist between staff and pupils clearly make a positive contribution to learning in most lessons. Consistently good teaching was seen in the primary phase but teaching across other areas was more varied. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and teachers have a good awareness of examination requirements.
- Teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to work hard to complete the tasks they are set. They manage situations calmly when pupils opt out of the work. Behaviour management is strong and teachers have a range of strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- Support for literacy and numeracy is sufficient across the school. Pupils' reading, speaking and listening skills are well developed but their written skills are less secure. Good presentation in books is not being systematically supported. Equality of opportunity and

the recognition of diversity are strong features across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school has very high aspirations for all its pupils. Staff and pupils work well together. All pupils are treated with dignity and respect. Their physical, mental and emotional well-being is developed exceptionally well throughout the school.
- Pupils say that they feel secure, supported and valued. They are enthusiastic and complimentary about the school and what it has to offer. They understand about bullying, including cyber bullying, and say that this is very rare and dealt with quickly by staff.
- All parents who responded to the online questionnaire agreed that their children were safe, well cared for and supported. Typical of the feedback is the comment from one parent who said that her son had 'blossomed from an anxious 11-year-old into a happy and confident young man with a bright future ahead of him'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour, considering the complexity of their needs and levels of anxiety, is good. Pupils understand what constitutes good behaviour and the consequences of poor behaviour. In the majority of lessons, pupils display positive attitudes to their learning and listen carefully to the teacher. They acknowledge that behaviour is not always perfect but say that instances of poor behaviour are dealt with firmly and sensitively.
- Attendance is below national averages but better in key stage 2 and key stage 3. Attendance figures are skewed by small numbers, part-time pupils and persistent non-attendance from a small group of older pupils and recent arrivals. Available attendance information is not always analysed effectively and this means that strategies to improve attendance in school are not sufficiently pursued.
- Punctuality to school is good, but some, mostly key stage 3 pupils, are tardy in getting to all of their lessons on time.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Many pupils typically arrive at the school with significant gaps in their education because of their complex needs and previous placement breakdowns. Many have previously refused to attend school or have attended a number of different settings before their placement at the school.
- As a result, pupils have significant gaps in their learning, and their attitudes to learning are often negative. Initially, the school rightly concentrates on improving pupils' attitudes to learning, self-confidence and behaviour. The school does this very effectively. Pupils make good progress in their personal development and in their ability to manage their own behaviour.

- Attainment and progress at the end of Year 6 is variable, with very few pupils taking external examinations. Over time, attainment at the end of Year 11 has remained significantly below national averages and performance has not increased in line with national trends.
- Progress has continued to be significantly below national averages. Leaders do not ensure that the progress made by pupils is formally monitored and tracked throughout the school. Leaders' knowledge of pupil progress is less secure and this prevents a more systematic and thorough approach to raising achievement.
- The proportions of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics are below those of other pupils nationally. Pupils supported by pupil premium funding and those following part-time courses do as well as their peers.
- The most able pupils do not do as well as they should and this is reflected in the below-average proportion of higher grades in the GCSE examinations. Often work is too easy and does not challenge or deepen their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, they are not reaching the highest levels of which they are capable.
- Work in pupils' books across age ranges and subjects shows variation in the quality of presentation, level of challenge and the amount of work achieved over time. In some subjects, work is unfinished, undemanding and scruffy in presentation. In contrast, the youngest pupils' English, mathematics and science books show high levels of productivity and huge pride in completing work with care and consideration.
- Pupils are prepared for their next stage of education through effective transition programmes. These programmes have ensured that the number of pupils not in education, employment or training is low in comparison with national averages. Pupils are supported and encouraged to move on to college courses.

School details

Unique reference number	131127
DfE registration number	846/6020
Inspection number	10025980

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	8 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietor	Nick Faulkner
Headteacher	Sue Parkinson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,650–7,485
Telephone number	01273 738 444
Website	www.driveprep.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@driveprep.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 February 2011

Information about this school

- The Drive Preparatory School is a small mixed non-selective independent school for pupils aged eight to 16 years old. The school opened in September 1996. At the time of the inspection, there were 45 pupils and four part-time pupils on roll. The previous inspection took place in February 2011.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is significantly above the national average. The school caters for pupils with specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school has one pupil who is supported by pupil premium funding. This funding is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after. The majority

of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is similar to national averages.

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision. The school meets all requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook observations of pupils' learning in 12 lessons or parts of lessons. They reviewed the work in pupils' books to check attainment, progress, feedback and presentation. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke with the proprietor of the school, and the other inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority on the phone. Inspectors held two meetings with pupils, representing all age groups, and spoke informally to pupils inside and outside of lessons.
- Inspectors looked at the school's website and a range of school documentation, including the self-evaluation and school improvement plans as well as safeguarding records and a range of policies. They also looked at the school's attendance, behaviour and exclusions information.
- Inspectors spoke to parents, and the views of 16 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered, along with further written comments provided by parents. Inspectors also considered 11 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Caroline Walshe

Ofsted Inspector

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