

The Shrubbery School

Walmley Ash Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B76 1HY

Inspection dates

13 February 2018

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 3, 3(a)

- At the previous inspection in June 2017, inspectors found that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment was variable across classes and year groups. Consequently, pupils did not make consistently strong progress in all subjects. Work was not always challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils, resulting in some pupils not achieving the higher standards.
- Following high-quality training, most teachers now routinely plan lessons that are appropriately challenging and match the needs and abilities of all pupils, including the most able. Plans take into account pupils' different starting points and usually ensure that pupils have access to the support and resources that they require in order to make progress.
- Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress. They increasingly use the information to review and adapt their plans to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge or to move pupils on quicker.
- Leaders have revised the feedback and marking policy. The majority of staff implement the policy to support individual pupils' learning effectively.
- While these improvements to teaching and learning can be seen in most classrooms, they are not yet used consistently in every class.
- Specialist teaching in physical education and computing helps to ensure that pupils make good progress in these subjects.
- Teaching is enabling the majority of pupils to acquire new knowledge and make progress in most lessons. There is evidence in pupils' books to show that most pupils are now working at the standards expected for their age and increasing numbers of pupils are working at the higher standards. However, it is too soon to see the impact of changes to the quality of teaching on standards over time and across the whole school. As a result, this standard is not met.

Paragraph 3, 3(c), 3(d)

- In June 2017, inspectors found that teachers did not use information about pupils' abilities to plan learning that met their needs. In addition, too much learning time was lost and pupils were not sufficiently engaged in their learning.
- The school's plan to address these unmet standards includes a range of clear and specific actions. These actions are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Teachers' planning reflects high expectations across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils are clear about what they are learning and why. Teachers' questioning encourages pupils to explain their thinking and deepen their learning.
- In mathematics, pupils have opportunities to tackle work at a range of different levels. Most teachers routinely provide pupils with 'stretch and challenge' activities to enable pupils to explain, reason and apply their mathematical knowledge. Many pupils' books include examples of practical activities and problem-solving tasks as well as routine practice of calculation skills.
- In literacy, teachers plan to support the development of writing skills effectively. Pupils are clear about what they are aiming to achieve and they are encouraged to assess their own work and that of their peers. As a result, pupils can see the progress that they are making and this improves their confidence in writing. For example, Year 2 pupils spoke enthusiastically about how they were learning about the features of a letter and were using these to write a letter to the 'Big Bad Wolf'.
- As a result of training since the last inspection, staff report being more confident in their teaching. They have raised expectations of what their pupils can achieve.
- Classrooms are generally welcoming and purposeful learning environments. Pupils show a positive level of engagement in their work and there are strong relationships between pupils and staff. During the inspection, the inspector observed pupils focusing well on their work and a balance of individual, paired and whole-class activities. Learning time was used effectively.
- These standards are now met.

Paragraph 3(g)

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were not using the school's assessment system effectively to evaluate the rate of progress made by individual pupils, or by groups of pupils. Consequently, leaders did not have a clear understanding of the progress made by pupils in English and mathematics across the school.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have revised the school's assessment systems and trained staff on the use of the school's tracking system. This has resulted in greater staff confidence and more accurate recording of pupils' progress and attainment. Leaders are constantly reviewing the system and how it can be further adapted to support teaching that is more effective across the school.
- Leaders and teachers use a range of assessment tools to support day-to-day learning in the classroom but also to give a picture of standards over time. Currently, there is a focus on ensuring that assessments in relation to English and mathematics are accurate and robust. Leaders are aware of the need to develop approaches to track the progress

of pupils in other subjects as well.

- Assessments are undertaken regularly and thoroughly. As a result, leaders and teachers are clear about individual pupils' needs, including the most able, and what actions are required to move their learning forward. Analysis of progress and standards of groups of pupils is developing.
- This standard is now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding procedures are effective. All staff have regular training to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and is readily available. It meets the most recent government requirements.
- Pupils are well cared for at all times. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet.
- Leaders carry out appropriate checks on all adults appointed to work at the school.
- These standards remain met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a)

- This independent school standard was not met at the June 2017 inspection because, while appropriate risk assessments were carried out, the proprietor had not ensured that there was a written risk assessment policy in place.
- A risk assessment policy is now available on the school's website. The headteacher has undertaken relevant health and safety in schools training and regularly checks to ensure that a good standard of health and safety is maintained.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders and the proprietor had not done enough to maintain a good quality of teaching and learning and to ensure that pupils, including the most able, made strong progress from their starting points. They had not paid sufficient attention to the independent school standards and, as a result, some standards were not met.
- The school's leadership team have written an action plan that focuses on the right priorities. The plan includes all the main issues identified at the time of the previous inspection.
- Leaders are determined to improve standards across the school and, through the actions they have already taken, show the capacity to do this.
- Leaders have introduced a new performance management system across the school to ensure high expectations and to help hold staff to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Teachers have responded very positively to this change and they are determined to raise standards across the school.

- Leaders have ensured that all staff have been able to benefit from high-quality training, specifically in relation to mathematics, phonics, and effective teaching and assessment strategies.
- A governing body has recently been formed, which includes community and parent representatives and an educational specialist. It is proposed that the governing body will hold the leadership team to account by monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and rates of pupils' progress across the school. However, it is too early to see the impact of its work.
- Leaders have introduced a more formal, regular approach to monitoring the quality of teaching across the school. This is starting to have a positive effect, because teaching now links more closely to pupils' needs and abilities. Staff are using a wider range of engaging teaching strategies. Leaders are aware that they still need to address some inconsistent practice.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have addressed successfully some of the identified weaknesses. This progress monitoring inspection found that one of the standards not met last time remains unmet. Therefore, the school does not meet the standards in this part in relation to leadership.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out below. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school:
 - enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3(a)).
- The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34 (1)(a));
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(b)).

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school:
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time (paragraph 3(c));
 - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3(d));
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3(g)).
- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up, and effective implementation of, a written risk assessment policy (paragraph 16, 16(a)).

School details

Unique reference number	103578
DfE registration number	330/6064
Inspection number	10044187

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Number of part-time pupils	26
Proprietor	Eric Allen and the estate of the late Paul Terry
Chair	Mr Dickon Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Atkins
Annual fees (day pupils)	Nursery £1,219–£2,099
	Infants (Rec, Y1, Y2) £2,425
	Juniors (Y3–Y6) £2,688
Telephone number	0121 351 1582
Website	www.shrubberyschool.co.uk
Email address	info@shrubbery.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	13–15 June 2017

Information about this school

- Shrubbery Independent School is on a single site in Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham. It is registered with the Department for Education (DfE) to provide full-time education for up to 280 boys and girls from ages 3 to 11.
- The school has been operating since 1930 and is the oldest co-educational independent school in Sutton Coldfield.

- The school aims to 'provide a happy and caring environment in which all children are encouraged to reach their full potential'.
- The school does not use any other site or provision.
- A standard inspection of the school was conducted on 13–15 June 2017.
- Since the last inspection, a governing body has been established to secure accountability for the quality of teaching and learning.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection following the standard inspection in June 2017. The inspection was carried out without notice.
- Following the standard inspection in June 2017, the Department for Education accepted the action plan submitted by the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of staff. The inspector also met with the chair of the newly formed governing body.
- The inspector observed teaching throughout the school and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school, as well as in lessons.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, records relating to safeguarding, school performance data and the school's website.

Inspection team

Catherine Crooks, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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