

The Preparatoria School

7 Park Plaza, Battlefield Enterprise Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 3AF

Inspection dates

23–24 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The leadership and management of the school are exceptional. Through regular monitoring, the principal ensures that teaching, learning and assessment are of the highest quality.
- The principal is passionate and determined. She ensures that each individual child develops a deep and lasting love of learning.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It provides a wealth of rich learning experiences and opportunities.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is highly effective. Interesting, well-chosen activities ensure that pupils are motivated to achieve high standards in their learning.
- Recent changes in the teaching of key reading and writing skills are helping pupils make more rapid progress.
- Teachers know their pupils well and plan for their individual needs. Despite only being in school for a short period of time, pupils are already making strong progress from their different starting points.
- Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is outstanding. Pupils have excellent manners and show empathy and understanding.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are inquisitive and want to learn. They support and celebrate each other's successes.
- Relationships with parents and carers are of the highest quality. Parents are valued and seen as integral to each child's learning journey.
- Leaders do not rest on their laurels. They constantly review the quality of education provided and make further refinements in order to meet the differing needs of all pupils.

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?

- Continue to monitor the impact of recent changes to the teaching of phonics and handwriting.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders are passionate, dedicated and committed to providing an exceptional education. In the short time that the school has been open, pupils have developed a love of learning; they flourish and reach high standards. There is a strong shared vision to do things differently, while ensuring that pupils make strong academic progress and succeed at the highest levels personally and socially.
- The principal has created a highly aspirational culture for the whole school community. She models the professional behaviours and very high standards expected from everyone. The school is a place where pupils and staff thrive.
- The principal ensures that teaching is of a high standard. Staff performance is checked and discussed regularly. Staff are given opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge through training, regular supervision and professional development meetings. As a result, staff feel valued and there is consistency of quality across the school in all aspects of provision.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. The school works closely with external agencies to secure appropriate and effective support for pupils. Parents commented on how quickly their child was supported and helped to make progress.
- The stimulating, innovative curriculum has been designed to kindle pupils' curiosity while ensuring the rapid development of a range of skills. It provides a wealth of rich learning opportunities. Literacy and mathematics are threaded through the curriculum and developed at every opportunity. Weekly sessions in a wooded area for 'tree top Tuesday' and visits to places such as the town library further enhance the curriculum. As a result, pupils are highly engaged in their learning.
- The curriculum continues to evolve as the school grows and develops. Leaders are acutely aware of the need to check the impact of what they are doing at each step to ensure that every pupil's needs are met effectively.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and sits at the heart of the school's ethos. Opportunities to reflect in awe and wonder at a discovery made or the chance to be still while listening to music enable even the very youngest pupils to become thoughtful and reflective members of the community. Pupils show empathy for those less fortunate than themselves and develop a strong sense of right and wrong.
- Relationships with parents are of the highest quality. The monthly café provides an opportunity for parents, pupils and staff to reflect on progress made so far. Links with parents are valued and seen as an integral part of each child's learning journey.

Governance

- Currently, the proprietor and the director provide governance. Their role is to determine the strategic direction of the school. They ensure that all the independent school standards are met and that the school is on a sound financial footing. They are both

extremely committed to ensuring the success of the school.

- The proprietor is unwavering in her desire to ensure the best possible provision for pupils at the school. She regularly reviews the practice across the school and uses the information effectively to further develop the curriculum and refine the approach to teaching and learning.
- The early years settings owned by the proprietor and the school support one another and discuss their work, so that expertise is shared.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has a comprehensive safeguarding policy which takes account of the most recent statutory guidance. It is available to parents through the school's website. All appropriate safety checks are made, including those for the safe recruitment of staff. Robust systems and processes are in place should a concern about a child be raised.
- The principal is the designated safeguarding lead for the school. She has a very good understanding of how to keep children safe. All staff are well trained in aspects of safeguarding. Every member of staff, irrespective of their role, knows each pupil extremely well. They remain vigilant and know what to do if they are worried about a child.
- All staff demonstrate an exemplary commitment to ensuring the welfare and well-being of all pupils. The principal works closely with families to ensure that support is provided where appropriate.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- A clear purpose and intent behind every learning activity ensure that teaching is highly effective. Links to real life bring learning alive and motivate pupils. Every moment is used to provide an opportunity to revise, practise or extend pupils' skills and knowledge.
- Teaching is highly effective. Questions are used to deepen pupils' understanding and develop critical thinking. Checks on what pupils can do are made through in-depth conversations. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions, and explore and find out for themselves. Pupils are challenged to work as independently as often as possible. As a result, they take ownership of their learning and are able to challenge themselves and each other.
- There is a secure knowledge of how young children learn and develop and pupils' needs are thoroughly understood. Accurate observations and assessments are used to plan a curriculum that meets pupils' needs and builds on what they can already do.
- Excellent use is made of the high-quality resources available both inside and out to ensure that learning is always interesting. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic. Pupils love the learning they are engaged in. Parents comment on the stimulating, full conversations they now have with their children about their current learning.
- Expectations of what pupils can do are extremely high. Pupils engage in tasks requiring high levels of concentration. For example, when making pumpkin pie, pupils read recipes

and measured ingredients precisely, comparing weights such as 92 and 50 grams. Adults encourage and support them effectively. Pupils persevere and show a determination to be as accurate as possible.

- Pupils know that their writing is highly valued and purposeful. For example, they create posters for coffee mornings and write menus for the café. Project books are full of questions pupils want to find answers to. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and write at every opportunity. A change to the way in which handwriting skills are taught is being introduced. Staff are passionate about not deterring pupils from writing freely and creatively, but recognise that pupils need the skills to be able to do so fluently.
- A love of reading is evident in the school. Books linked to project work are eagerly shared and scrutinised by the pupils. As a result of a visit to the local library, pupils designed and created their own class library. It is extremely well resourced and provides pupils with a wide range of books that challenge and engage. Following an initial assessment, specific reading skills are now being taught effectively. Pupils begin to use their phonic skills when reading independently. The principal and teacher are committed to ensuring that every pupil becomes a fluent reader.
- Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills and knowledge are many and varied. Through the project work and in specific mathematics sessions, pupils are challenged to use what they know already to solve problems and find solutions. They make good use of the extensive range of practical resources when measuring and calculating. As a result, pupils solve increasingly complex problems by themselves and talk about what they have done.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are highly inquisitive and curious. They show a fascination for soaking up knowledge and love to inform others about what they have learned. During the inspection, pupils shared key facts about cheetahs and warthogs with the inspector. Pupils display high levels of determination and resilience. They do not give up easily.
- Pupils are encouraged to be independent from an early age. They change for physical education (PE) lessons, folding their clothes neatly, and lay the table for lunch and clear away after any activity. They quickly develop confidence in their own abilities.
- Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, when getting ready to go for PE, pupils know to take the safety bag 'in case anyone gets hurt' and to wear a high-visibility jacket when necessary 'so car drivers can see us'. They talk about using a tablet or computer with an adult.
- Respectful relationships are evident across the school. Pupils show empathy and understanding. When a pupil achieves something, other pupils praise them spontaneously.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' social skills are very well developed, and they know just how to behave. Pupils' manners are exemplary. They understand taking turns in a conversation and engage in high-quality discussions and conversations. Pupils display impeccable conduct in every part of the school.
- Pupils are keen to learn and quickly settle to the different tasks and activities. They cooperate and work well in pairs and small groups. They get on well together, showing respect to all around them.
- Relationships are exceptionally strong. Highly positive relationships are evident between pupils and with adults. The pupils show great care for the younger children in the pre-school and go out of their way to help them. For example, when pouring their own drinking water at lunchtime, pupils advise younger children on how much to put in without the glass overflowing.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Parents comment on how eager their children are to get dressed and come each morning. Consequently, attendance rates are high.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- It is too early to judge whether pupils make substantial and sustained progress over time. However, despite only being in school for a short period of time, pupils are making strong progress from their different starting points. This is a result of highly effective, targeted teaching and appropriate challenge.
- Pupils are keen to read. Through daily reading sessions, they develop a secure knowledge of phonics. Some pupils are beginning to blend letters into words and can read a greater number of words independently. More fluent readers focus intently when reading and talk confidently about what they have read.
- Consistently strong progress in writing is clearly evident in pupils' books and in the work displayed around the school. Writing is developing from simple mark making to more accurate letter formation and from single words to simple phrases that are correctly punctuated. Pupils are beginning to use their phonic knowledge when writing independently. Recent changes in the approaches used to teach key reading and writing skills are helping pupils acquire greater accuracy and quickly improve their skills.
- Pupils' books indicate good progress in the development of mathematical skills and knowledge. There is evidence of increased complexity in the challenges that pupils solve independently. In their practical work, pupils show what they can do and through their explanations demonstrate their understanding.
- Pupils are making strong progress in a range of subjects. Their project work contains thoughtful questions and pictures, as well as plans and maps with an increasing level of detail developing over time. Their ideas become more complex as they make links with what they already know and build upon this knowledge. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary, for example when discussing scientific ideas. They use their literacy and numeracy skills well in other subject areas.

- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. They are confident and can make decisions for themselves.

School details

Unique reference number	145478
DfE registration number	893/6035
Inspection number	10056210

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	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Jane Elizabeth Smalley
Headteacher	Jane Elizabeth Smalley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,540
Telephone number	01743 460199
Website	www.shrewsburyprepatoria.co.uk
Email address	principal@shrewsburyprepatoria.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school was registered with the Department for Education on 9 May 2018. It opened on 3 September 2018. This was the school's first independent school standard inspection.
- The school is registered for 13 pupils aged five to seven. There are currently six pupils on roll.
- The school is open for 48 weeks in the year. Pupils are able to take up to nine weeks leave of absence throughout the year.
- The school is located on an enterprise park close to Shrewsbury town centre. The proprietor also operates two early years settings from the business park. These settings were judged to be outstanding by Ofsted in 2017/18. The settings and the school are

collectively known as 'Shrewsbury Prepatoria'.

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision currently.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the principal and class teacher.
- The inspector observed pupils learning and visited the classroom, 'The Lab', the outdoor area, the kitchen where food cookery takes place, and the 'piazza'.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' books and class project books to look at work across the curriculum.
- Pupils were spoken to formally and informally. The inspector heard pupils read. They observed behaviour in classrooms and at lunchtime, including outside.
- The inspector talked to a group of parents before school started on the second day of the inspection. The four responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and six responses to the free-text service were also considered.
- The inspector took note of and analysed 11 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Various school policy documents were scrutinised, including those for keeping children safe. Records of monitoring and information about pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour were also discussed with leaders. The school's website was looked at in detail.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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