

St George's Preparatory School & Little Dragons Preschool

126 London Road, Boston, Lincolnshire PE21 7HB

Inspection dates

15–17 January 2019

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	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The proprietors have ensured that all the independent school standards have been met.
- Leaders promote an ambitious culture within the school, based on a clear vision and very high expectations for pupils' personal development and academic progress. The proprietors ensure that the ethos is lived out in the daily life of the school.
- Teachers draw on their strong subject knowledge to plan learning that fosters curiosity and encourages pupils to explore, experiment and ask questions.
- Teachers know the pupils extremely well and this enables them to ensure that learning is matched precisely to individuals' needs. Regular checks are made on pupils' progress to ensure that they are achieving the standards of which they are capable.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They say their children are safe and well cared for and are full of praise for the staff.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the high levels of attendance.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and respectful at all times, both with adults and each other. They understand and appreciate the school's ethos and values.
- The broad, distinctive curriculum inspires pupils and they are highly motivated to learn. Much of their learning takes place outdoors and they speak enthusiastically about the range of activities available to them.
- From a range of individual starting points, pupils in all classes make excellent progress and most achieve standards beyond those expected for their age by the time they leave the school.
- Children make an excellent start in the early years. Teachers skilfully shape learning that enables children to acquire early reading, writing and mathematical skills so that they are well prepared for their transition to Year 1.

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?

- Increase opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures more deeply so that their knowledge and understanding is as strong as in other aspects of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The proprietors have ensured that all the independent school standards have been met. High aspirations drive the work of the school and pupils' personal development and welfare are central to the school's ethos. This is underpinned by the school's distinctive curriculum, which enables pupils to achieve highly academically and promotes independence. The high expectations apply to staff and pupils alike and all members of the school community strive for excellence.
- The school buildings and grounds provide an engaging environment for learning. The woodland area in the grounds is the site for Forest School activities as well as other outdoor learning opportunities. The curriculum provides a carefully planned balance between Forest School, subject-specific and cross-curricular teaching, and includes time for reflection and considering 'big questions'. This enables pupils to develop a good understanding of values such as tolerance and respect for others, as well as the ability to reach consensus through discussion and listening to others' ideas and views.
- The school also provides enrichment activities through after school clubs, off-site visits and visitors to the school. During the inspection, younger children experienced a visit from an African visitor. They enjoyed taking part in different activities, for example dancing and listening to traditional stories from Africa. Musical and sporting talents are nurtured and pupils are encouraged to participate in activities where they can use and develop their skills or try something new.
- Leaders have implemented a range of monitoring activities to check on the progress of pupils and benchmark the school's performance against national expectations. Subject leaders carry out regular monitoring of teaching and learning. Regular discussions about the impact of teaching ensure that all staff are well informed and there is consistency and clear progression in learning throughout the school. Staff value the opportunities for professional development. They are outward-looking and regularly attend meetings with colleagues in other schools so they can share ideas and moderate their own work.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The responses to the online survey praise the way the school helps their children to develop confidence and achieve well academically. Parents value the commitment of the staff, saying, 'They take an interest in the children as individuals,' and 'They encourage them to be the best version of themselves they can be.' Parents also state the benefits of the curriculum, for example, 'The freedom of learning outside in the forest is amazing.'
- Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, and show awareness of current affairs. For example, older pupils talked to an inspector about news items they had seen recently. They also show great respect and tolerance for others, understanding that people are entitled to their own views. However, they are less knowledgeable about different religions and beliefs.

Governance

- The proprietors set the strategic direction of the school and ensure that it maintains its

distinctive character and continues to be successful. They do this by:

- having a clear understanding of their statutory duties and responsibilities
- being actively involved in the day-to-day life of the school
- promoting the ethos and core values of the school, ensuring that pupils are well prepared to make a positive contribution to society in the future
- providing support and challenge to colleagues, and monitoring the school's work carefully
- working with other local schools and comparing the school's performance to national expectations.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school website and reflects the most recent government guidance. There are clear procedures for reporting and recording concerns. Staff know the pupils well, are vigilant and ensure that any minor worries are addressed swiftly so they do not escalate.
- Leaders are very aware of potential risks to pupils. They ensure that risk assessments are carefully carried out and implemented. This is particularly pertinent where Forest School and outdoor learning is concerned. Dynamic risk assessments are used and pupils are involved in assessing different levels of risk. Staff also consider the benefits of managed risk-taking to ensure a balanced view of adventurous activities.
- Safeguarding is a standing item on the staff meeting agenda. Staff receive regular updates and are expected to complete a range of online training. Staff are confident about raising concerns and the school's procedures are well understood.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching throughout the school leads to high levels of engagement, motivation and enjoyment from pupils. Lessons often provide opportunities for pupils to follow their own interests and teachers are responsive to pupils' ideas. Pupils are extremely positive about all aspects of their learning, saying in particular, 'We love learning outside.'
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and they use highly effective questioning to check pupils' understanding and provide additional challenge. Teachers use a range of resources skilfully so that pupils can work in different ways, thereby helping them to achieve a deeper understanding of their work. There are many opportunities to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills while learning about science, history and geography. As a result, pupils develop a broad knowledge in a range of subjects and are able to apply basic skills in a range of contexts.
- Teachers set high expectations and pupils are always encouraged to do their best. Books are neat and well presented. They show that pupils can tackle a range of work successfully. Outcomes of practical activities also show how learning is deepened. For example, Year 3 pupils modelled different fractions to show each fraction as part of a whole.

- Teachers monitor individual pupils carefully, providing support where needed and adding challenge to ensure that they make good progress. Regular assessments are made and teachers know each pupil's capabilities in detail. Information is shared with parents in termly reports.
- Outdoor and adventurous activities help to develop such skills as teamwork, collaboration, risk assessment and respect for others. For example, during their Forest School session Year 6 pupils were observed problem-solving, requiring the group to assess potential risks and reach a consensus on what action to take. Skilful intervention by the teacher not only ensured that pupils proceeded safely, but facilitated a discussion that deepened pupils' knowledge and understanding of how woodland animals are adapted to live in their environment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. They are confident, resilient learners who embrace challenges and have a range of strategies they can use to solve problems or when they find work difficult. They take a pride in their own achievements and also celebrate their peers' successes.
- Pupils say that the school helps them to be prepared for their next stage in education and later life. They have high aspirations, considering future occupations such as doctor, teacher, marine biologist or working to save endangered animal species.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school, bullying is extremely rare and they have confidence in their teachers to sort out any concerns quickly. They are aware of the need to follow rules for their own safety, for example, when learning outdoors 'we have boundaries'.
- Pupils understand the benefits of lifestyles that include healthy eating and regular exercise. As well as during their lesson times, pupils enjoy being active at playtimes and many are keen participants in sport outside of school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their exemplary conduct lives up to the high expectations set by school leaders. The behaviour policy is applied consistently throughout the school and pupils understand the sanctions for poor behaviour, but told the inspector that good manners are important and 'very rarely do people get into trouble'.
- Pupils clearly enjoy being at school and this is reflected in the high attendance levels. The school follows up absences thoroughly and quickly to ensure pupils' safety. Any extended absences are discussed with parents.
- During lessons, pupils concentrate well and are keen to participate. Their excellent attitudes mean there is no disruption to their learning. The school's well-established routines ensure that there is a calm and orderly atmosphere and no time is lost as pupils move from one lesson to another.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Overall, pupils make strong progress across a range of subjects, so that by the time they leave the school they have reached standards that are above average for their age. The school's assessments and pupils' workbooks show that the majority of pupils are currently working at standards beyond those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most pupils are fluent readers, who are able to tackle increasingly complex texts. Older pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and choose books based on their interests. They say that they like finding out new things from the books they read and understand the importance of reading to support learning in other subjects. They also enjoy the class novels which they read and discuss as a class. Younger pupils are developing sound strategies to tackle new words and read regularly both at home and at school.
- Pupils write confidently for a range of purposes and audiences. They make excellent progress over time and books provide evidence of high-quality outcomes for many pupils. They often practise writing skills in other subjects, for example writing reports in science and writing a diary as a historical character.
- Pupils' work in mathematics shows that they become increasingly fluent in calculation skills as they move through the school. Pupils are able to use these skills in different contexts. In the mathematics books of some of the older pupils there are excellent examples of pupils explaining their work and showing how they have solved problems.
- When pupils encounter difficulties with their learning, individual support is provided and this helps to accelerate progress. As a result, very few pupils are working below the standards expected for their age.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Most children join the early years with skills and knowledge that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. They make excellent progress so that by the end of their Reception Year almost all achieve a good level of development and are very well prepared for their transition to Year 1.
- The leadership of the early years is very strong and there is a clear overview of the provision. Children's progress is recorded in detail so there is a growing picture of what children know, understand and can do. Parents are involved in initial assessments and are encouraged to continue contributing throughout the early years. There are regular reviews of assessments to identify any gaps in learning so they can be addressed quickly.
- Children settle happily into the routines and the school's way of working. Good relationships are quickly established. Children soon gain confidence and take part in the many exciting learning opportunities. Independence is promoted at all times and children quickly develop self-care skills.
- Teachers plan flexibly, often following the interests of the child, making sure all areas of learning are represented. There is a range of activities both inside and outdoors. The outdoor area has been improved since the last inspection and there are opportunities for

creative and varied play. There are raised beds for growing plants and there is plenty of space for all children to be involved.

- Children's welfare is at the heart of all learning, reflecting the school ethos. Children learn through a wide range of activities, developing the skills they need to cooperate and collaborate with others as well as being self-reliant. Teachers are skilled at intervening at just the right moments, for example to seize an opportunity to extend learning or to introduce a new idea. High-quality questioning encourages children's curiosity and helps them build their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Consequently, learning is dynamic and flexible.
- Leaders have ensured that all the statutory requirements for the early years are in place.

School details

Unique reference number	137327
DfE registration number	925/6000
Inspection number	10078681

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mark Whelan and Sarah Whelan
Headteacher	Sarah Whelan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,467
Telephone number	01205 317600
Website	www.saintgeorgesprep.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@saintgeorgesprep.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–21 January 2016

Information about this school

- St George's Preparatory School and Little Dragons Nursery is a non-selective independent school for boys and girls aged three to 11 on the outskirts of Boston, a Lincolnshire market town.
- The school building is a large Victorian grade 2 listed building with a number of original features of historical interest. The grounds include a car park, hard play area, grassed area and large wooded area.
- The school first opened in 2011, offering a distinctive curriculum which includes the opportunity for outdoor learning through its Forest School curriculum.
- The proprietors are a husband and wife team who own and manage the school. One is

the headteacher, the other is the school business manager who also teaches the Forest School activities.

- The school aims to provide children with a rich experience that encourages each individual to achieve their very best academically while becoming confident learners who are emotionally resilient, independent, adaptable, tolerant and respectful of others. The school also encourages and nurtures pupils' individual talents.
- The school motto is 'Believe, achieve, succeed'.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes to observe learning. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- A tour of the school and its grounds was carried out to check on the suitability of the premises.
- Inspectors held meetings with the proprietors, headteacher and middle leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed samples of pupils' work with the headteacher and scrutinised the school's assessment information.
- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils and listened to pupils read. They also talked with pupils at other times during the inspection.
- A check on the school website was carried out to confirm that the required information, including the safeguarding policy, is available.
- Inspectors talked informally with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day and took into account 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors took into account 10 responses to the staff questionnaire and 47 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jane Salt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector

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