

Inspection of Leicester Preparatory School

2 Albert Road, Stoneygate, Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 2AA

Inspection dates: 25–27 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils want to achieve well. They benefit from studying a wide range of subjects, including French and Mandarin. They enjoy extra-curricular activities, such as yoga, taekwondo and tapestry. They visit the theatre and art galleries and take part in musical events. Pupils know that their teachers help them and expect them to be successful.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. A typical comment from parents and carers was, 'My child is happy and wants to go to school, even in the holidays.' Pupils get on well together. They know what bullying is and told us they can use the 'worry box' to tell an adult if they have a concern. As one pupil said, 'Any problem that we have is always dealt with well.'

Most pupils behave well. Teachers reward them for their positive attitudes and achievements. Sometimes, pupils disrupt others' learning. When this happens, some teachers do not make clear to pupils how they should behave.

Pupils take on positions of responsibility. For instance, they took pride in showing grandparents around the school during a recent open day. Pupils also contribute to the wider world. Following the recent Australian bushfires, they took the initiative to raise funds to help rescued koala bears.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

New leaders have taken swift action to improve pupils' quality of education. In a short time, leaders have reviewed the curriculums in key stages 1 and 2. They make sure that teachers understand what pupils should learn by the end of each academic year. Overall, leaders have worked successfully with teachers to organise what pupils need to know in each subject and when. They ensure that teachers' plans help pupils achieve what they should.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. In each subject, the curriculum plan matches, or exceeds, the demands of the national curriculum. Teachers make sure that each new topic builds on what pupils already know. For example, in mathematics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 identified a circle's properties using their previous learning. In Years 3 and 4, as part of their scientific studies, pupils learn about forces before considering how friction affects objects. However, leaders do not make sure that curriculum planning always takes into account what children have learned in the early years when these children move into key stage 1.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They check pupils' understanding and give them challenging activities when appropriate. Teachers go over work again to ensure that all pupils understand previous learning. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can recall European countries, their capitals and facts about the countries' populations. Teachers assess what pupils know and then plan learning to plug any gaps. They revisit basic skills, for example to improve pupils' number work or to help them

become more confident writers. We saw Year 2 pupils practise using adjectives in poems, while older pupils focused on their use of paragraphs. Occasionally, teachers move on before pupils' learning is secure. Pupils' handwriting is not consistently good.

Adults are well trained to teach early reading. Practising phonics is a daily routine for younger pupils. Children listen intently during story time and want to predict what happens next. They enjoy reading to adults and use their skills to work out new words. If a pupil finds reading difficult, teachers provide extra support. Older pupils have access to good-quality texts. They read fluently and with appropriate expression. However, leaders do not ensure that reading is part of the day-to-day school routine for these pupils. Older pupils do not develop a love of reading and literature.

Leadership of the early years is effective. Teachers involve parents from the start so that they know how their children are getting on. The curriculum is well planned and children enjoy lots of different activities. They take part in visits, for instance to Warwick Castle. Adults have the same high aspirations for all children and move them on to the next stage when they are ready. Relationships between adults and children are warm. Children behave well and are kept safe. They are well prepared for Year 1.

There are lots of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. All pupils enter a verse-speaking competition to develop their confidence. During our visit, pupils spent time on the 'life skills' bus, thinking about how they could make good choices to stay physically and mentally healthy. They know how to stay safe, for instance when online, when near a road or if there is a fire. Pupils understand that they should respect people of different faiths and cultures. Pupils told us, 'We treat everyone the way we want to be treated.'

The proprietor is well informed and has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. He has worked closely with the headteacher and an educational consultant to improve the quality of education. He is determined that the school will continue to get better. The proprietor checks that the school environment is well maintained and resourced. He is mindful of staff well-being and has made sure that the school complies with the 2010 Equality Act.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding leader is well trained and knowledgeable. She ensures that all staff receive up-to-date training. She keeps detailed records and works closely with external agencies to make sure that pupils have the help they need.

Staff know the signs that a pupil may be at risk. They understand the risks pupils might face, for example from female genital mutilation or radicalisation and extremism.

The proprietor makes all necessary checks on adults before they start work at the school. Leaders resolved some minor inconsistencies in safeguarding procedures during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders do not always plan the key stage 1 curriculum so that it builds on what children learn in the early years. In some subjects, pupils do not use the knowledge they have. Leaders must ensure that curriculum leaders understand the early years curriculum and use it as a starting point for pupils' learning in key stage 1.
- Some teachers do not have high-enough expectations of how pupils should behave in lessons. They allow some pupils to disrupt the learning of others. Leaders must ensure that teachers manage pupils' behaviour consistently in lessons so that pupils can focus on their learning.
- Leaders do not promote a whole-school approach to reading. Older pupils are not encouraged to read widely and often enough. They do not develop a love of reading and literature. Leaders should promote a culture of reading that permeates all aspects of the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	120329
DfE registration number	856/6003
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10124534
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	80
Number of part-time pupils	14
Proprietor	Francis Fernandes
Headteacher	Charles Northcote
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,550
Telephone number	01162 707 414
Website	www.leicesterprep.co.uk
Email address	office@leicesterprep.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–11 May 2018

Information about this school

- Leicester Preparatory School is an independent day school.
- The school is registered to admit 150 pupils between the ages of three and 11 years. There are currently 80 pupils on the school's roll, including 14 children who attend the school's nursery part-time.
- The headteacher was appointed in August 2019. The deputy headteacher took up post in the summer term of 2019.
- The school's last standard inspection took place on 9–11 May 2018. A progress monitoring inspection took place on 25 September 2019.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with the headteacher and the proprietor. We met the leader who has oversight of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the early years leader.
- We did deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, writing and geography. We met with leaders responsible for these subjects, visited lessons, listened to pupils reading, looked at pupils' workbooks, met with teachers and spoke with pupils.
- We observed the behaviour of pupils at playtime and lunchtime and spoke with pupils informally.
- We met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. We reviewed the school's system for recruiting staff and the school's single central register. We looked at documentation relating to safeguarding.
- We took into account the 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 14 free-text responses. We also considered the seven responses to the staff survey and the 16 responses to the pupils' questionnaire.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation of the school's performance, curriculum plans and information concerning pupils' attendance and behaviour. We considered relevant documentation and information in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- We checked the facilities of the school site against part 5 of the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

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