

# Inspection of Iona School

310 Sneinton Dale, Sneinton, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG3 7DN

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Inspection dates: 6–8 July 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to this friendly and happy school. One pupil said, 'Everyone knows everyone, and I am friends with everyone!' Incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are rare. Pupils get on well with each other. They are polite and respectful of visitors. They feel safe. Pupils are well supported by caring adults.

Pupils enjoy being outside on 'The Land'. They grow produce in the large allotment. There are opportunities to perform in the amphitheatre. Pupils develop their scientific knowledge in the woodland. Pupils respond well to the 'rhythm' both of the day and of the week. There are planned times when pupils come together. There are then other opportunities for pupils to work alone or to have the chance to be creative. Pupils particularly enjoy art and singing.

Staff have high expectations for every pupil. The curriculum is preparing pupils well for their next stage of education.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One typical comment was, 'This school is wonderful for the well-being of every child. The way subjects are taught gives a wholesome, full body way of learning.'

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

The proprietor has ensured that there is a broad and balanced curriculum. It is ambitious for all pupils. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum offers pupils the chance to develop their knowledge and skills in a range of subjects. Most subject leaders (or advocates) have planned out what they want pupils to learn and when. However, not all subject leaders have checked that their subject curriculum is being implemented as intended.

The science curriculum is well planned and sequenced. For example, children in the kindergarten (early years foundation stage) learn about seasonal change. Next, pupils learn about how the seasons impact on plants and farming. Finally, the older pupils visit a local farm and learn the parts of plants and their functions.

The mathematics curriculum has well sequenced and planned units of work. Pupils develop their knowledge of mathematics well as they move through the school. Pupils can revisit previously learned content through 'flashbacks' and small quizzes. These help to ensure that pupils know more and remember more.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They present content clearly. Teachers often use 'real life' experiences to inspire pupils' writing. After a recent visit to Nottingham, pupils wrote a descriptive piece. They had to imagine what the city was like during the time of Robin Hood. One pupil had written, 'A dark, shadowy, thin and lifeless body loomed over me.'

Teachers often assess pupils' abilities. Pupils who need extra help receive it promptly. This is particularly the case in reading. Pupils in Year 6 are confident and fluent readers. They have books at the correct level of challenge. They say they read often. There is a good range of books for pupils to choose from.

Pupils behave well. They have a good attitude to learning. Leaders have successfully improved the attendance of many pupils. Pupils are confident communicators. They listen carefully and respect views that may be different to their own. In one class, for example, pupils were sensibly discussing possible meanings of the phrase, 'the straw that broke the camel's back'.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum is preparing the oldest pupils well for life in modern Britain. They are knowledgeable about faiths and cultures different to their own. They understand British values such as tolerance and respect. They know about diverse types of families and discrimination. Pupils have an age-appropriate view of relationships and keeping healthy. However, the PSHE curriculum is not fully planned out and sequenced. It is unclear which aspects of the curriculum should be taught and when, particularly for younger pupils.

Pupils with SEND are catered for well. There is a clear system in place for spotting any pupils who need extra help. The help they receive is effective. Outside agencies are contacted where necessary. The leader responsible for pupils with SEND checks that teachers are adapting the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND receive work at the right level of challenge.

Children in the kindergarten are prepared well for their next stage. The proprietor has ensured that the safety and welfare requirements are met. Both indoor and outdoor environments are appropriate. Staff have created a homely feel to the classrooms. The children experience a programme of activities that are appropriate to their needs. During 'ring time', children learn and remember a variety of rhymes and songs. These help to develop their listening skills and improve their vocabulary. Teachers provide children with many practical activities. These include painting, weaving, playing games and baking bread. Children behave well and have a good attitude to learning.

The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Policies contain the appropriate statutory information. Pupils' health and welfare are supported through appropriate risk assessment. Staff have received first-aid and paediatric first-aid training. The premises are kept to a good standard. The classrooms have appropriate lighting and acoustics. The toilets have hot water that does not pose a risk of scalding. There is a suitable outdoor area for the pupils to exercise. There are changing rooms and showers. The safeguarding policy is available to download via the school's website. The school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The proprietor has ensured that most of the weaknesses found at the previous standard inspection are being addressed. For example, the trustees now receive

more-relevant information from school leaders. School improvement planning is sharper. The trustees are now better placed to hold the school leaders to account.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The proprietor has ensured that staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. Staff are knowledgeable about the 'Prevent' duty, county lines drug trafficking and spotting the signs of neglect. Staff know what to do should they have a concern about the welfare of a pupil. The designated safeguarding lead knows to contact outside agencies where appropriate. Safeguarding records are kept in good order.

The single central record meets statutory requirements. Leaders have undertaken safer recruitment training. Adults cannot work at the school until all the necessary checks have been undertaken.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Some subject leaders have yet to fully monitor their subject. They are unsure if their subject is being taught as intended. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders check thoroughly that their subject curriculum is implemented effectively.
- Pupils are receiving an appropriate PSHE curriculum. The oldest pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. However, the PSHE curriculum is currently not as well planned as it could be, particularly for younger pupils. It is too ad-hoc. Leaders should ensure that the PSHE curriculum is fully sequenced across all years so that all teachers know exactly which aspects are to be taught and when.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122941
<b>DfE registration number</b>	892/6010
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10194717
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	71
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	6
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Iona School Association
<b>Chair of college of teachers</b>	Robert Strafford
<b>Business Manager</b>	Nick Delaforce-Sanders
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£6,724.10
<b>Telephone number</b>	01159 415295
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theionaschool.org.uk">www.theionaschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:reception@theionaschool.org.uk">reception@theionaschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4–6 December 2018

## Information about this school

- The school follows the Steiner curriculum. The school's stated aim is that 'educating children should be a continuing process and our task is to stimulate and develop the faculties and skills which enable our pupils to learn for life, from life, throughout life'.
- In line with normal Steiner practice, there is no headteacher. However, there is a chair of college of teachers who is responsible for the education provision. The business manager is in charge of the day-to-day running of the school.
- The previous standard inspection took place on 4 to 6 December 2018. The school had a progress monitoring inspection on 3 July 2019.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative providers.
- The school has an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.

## 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 checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. This included touring the school's premises and looking at various documents and policies.
- This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in our evaluation.
- We looked closely at the quality of education in English, mathematics, science and PSHE. This involved talking with the subject leaders, visiting lessons, viewing samples of pupils' work and speaking with pupils about their learning.
- We spoke with the subject leader and examined curriculum plans and pupils' work in art.
- We scrutinised various documents and records relating to safeguarding. We checked the single central record and the school's recruitment procedures.
- We held meetings with the trustees, senior leaders and other staff. We spoke with pupils from each class and visited all classrooms. We observed pupils during social times.

## **Inspection team**

Peter Stonier, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

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