

Inspection of Bicker Preparatory School and Early Years

School Lane, Bicker, Boston, Lincolnshire PE20 3DW

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
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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	Good
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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 flourish at this school. They feel happy and safe. There is a deep sense of care and mutual respect. Pupils have impeccable manners.

From Nursery through to Year 6, pupils know right from wrong. Staff deal with any incidents of bullying swiftly. These are rare. Low-level disruption is not tolerated. Lessons run smoothly. Pupils' behaviour is exceptional.

Pupils enjoy studying a wide range of subjects. Staff expect pupils to work hard. They do. Pupils' work in a broad range of subjects is of good quality. They learn and remember interesting facts and develop a broad range of knowledge. They learn to be resilient if the answer to a problem is not obvious. They read widely to learn more. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities that support their personal development. For instance, they put themselves in someone else's shoes through drama. They ask questions of visiting experts. They fundraise for local and national charities.

Parents and carers have positive views of the school. A typical comment was: 'It is an incredibly supportive and personable school that brings out the best in my child.'

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

Pupils receive a good quality of education. Leaders have put in place a well-planned and sequenced curriculum in all subjects. In some subjects, including English, mathematics and science, the knowledge that pupils will learn is described clearly. Teachers use this to check what pupils have remembered. They identify the most important next steps. However, assessment in other subjects is not as well developed.

Leaders ensure that reading is always a priority. Staff have received appropriate phonics training. There is a consistent approach that starts promptly in the Reception class. Clear routines and carefully sequenced lessons ensure that pupils develop the knowledge they need to read well. Books are well matched to the sounds that pupils know. Accurate assessments identify pupils who may need extra practice. Help is quickly put into place, so pupils keep up and become confident readers.

Staff promote a love of reading. Teachers select books that engage pupils in interesting topics. Pupils have many opportunities to read for pleasure. They have a good selection of challenging books to choose from, including poetry and non-fiction. Teachers read to pupils daily. Pupils have opportunities to read in a wide range of subjects.

In mathematics, teachers use assessment well. At the end of each unit of learning, teachers check which parts of the curriculum pupils have learned and remembered. Shorter, frequent checks help teachers to plan their next lessons. Teaching addresses

any gaps in pupils' understanding. Pupils are taught how to apply their knowledge to increasingly demanding mathematical problems. They can explain how they have solved a problem and understand how to correct their mistakes. In the early years, children use practical materials to help their understanding of numbers.

Pupils have very positive attitudes toward their learning. They are keen to succeed. Pupils readily answer teachers' questions and take an active role in lessons. They enjoy being rewarded with house points for working hard and behaving well. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, pupils' attendance has remained high, and pupils are always punctual to lessons.

Pupils are encouraged to be resilient and to develop strength of character. They have a good understanding of how to live a healthy and active lifestyle. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have respect for all, including people with different faiths, beliefs and lifestyles to their own.

Leaders want every pupil to achieve their best. Teachers know pupils well. Learning is well tailored to every pupil. Staff cater well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are well trained to do this.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start. Relationships between staff and children are positive. The well-resourced indoor and outdoor classrooms feed children's imagination. Adults receive regular training to enable children to learn the curriculum well. Children are encouraged to explore the natural environment. Learning opportunities are used well to increase children's vocabulary. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders work with other organisations to provide staff training and to share good practice. Staff appreciate these opportunities.

The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards and the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage are met. Leaders ensure that they implement the statutory guidance for relationships and sex education. The building and classrooms are maintained to a very good standard. The required policies contain the necessary statutory guidance. The safeguarding policy is available for parents to download from the school's website. There are appropriate procedures in place around first aid, risk assessment and fire safety. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor is vigilant and diligent. The well-being of pupils and staff comes first.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well. They are well trained. They are quick to spot and share concerns. Leaders take appropriate action. They work with external organisations and professionals effectively. Leaders keep detailed safeguarding records.

Leaders complete all pre-employment checks before adults start working with pupils. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, they learn about online safety and respectful relationships. They know how to report anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Relationships are positive between staff and pupils, and between staff and parents. This supports the school's safeguarding procedures.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, assessment is at an early stage of development. Teachers do not consistently check what pupils have learned and remembered. As a result, they are unable to identify and address any gaps in learning as well as they could. Assessment processes should be robust, across all subjects.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	130283
DfE registration number	925/6041
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10232290
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	44
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Mr R J Page and Mrs H L Page
Headteacher	Anne Daynes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,600
Telephone number	01775 821 786
Website	www.bickerprep.co.uk
Email address	office@bickerprep.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 to 17 May 2018

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2021.
- The proprietor notified the Department for Education of changes to proprietor arrangements in April 2022.
- The school provides before- and after-school childcare.
- The school does not use any alternative provisions.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place from 15 to 17 May 2018.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the two proprietors, the headteacher and other staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, history and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, looked at pupils' work, visited lessons and spoke with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils about their understanding of safeguarding matters. The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding policy and other related policies. The lead inspector scrutinised the school's single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children and the school's safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector toured the school site to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered parents' views as shared through free-text comments entered on Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mandy Wilding, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Long

Ofsted Inspector

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