

Inspection of Twycross House Pre-Preparatory School

The Hollies, The Green, Twycross, Atherstone, Warwickshire CV9 3PQ

Inspection dates: 4 to 6 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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	Outstanding
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a sense of eagerness and enthusiasm as pupils arrive at school. They enjoy being together. Pupils say that there is always a friend to play with. There is plenty of equipment and a harmonious atmosphere as pupils play together on the school field.

All staff help pupils to learn routines really well. The high expectations about how pupils move around the school are clear. For example, pupils hold doors open for visitors. Pupils are keen to share what they know during lessons. Sometimes, pupils forget how important it is to listen to each other.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They say that occasionally they fall out with each other, but teachers help them to sort this out. They do not feel that bullying happens very often. New worry boxes are in classrooms as a way to raise any concerns that pupils may have.

Leaders want pupils to receive a high-quality curriculum which is broad and balanced. They have made sure that there are many impressive facilities around the site to support this. Leaders have made changes to improve the curriculum further. Some of these are at an early stage of implementation.

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

Leaders want children to get off to a flying start when they start in the early years. Teachers organise a 'summer school' so that children can meet each other and find out more about where everything is. They soon settle into routines when they start in September. Staff encourage children to eat with a knife and fork. They talk together about which fruit they will choose. Children quickly learn to change their shoes when they come inside after playtimes.

Children enjoy learning together in the 'discovery room'. Teachers make sure that children practise the sounds that they are learning and write these sounds in words. Teachers do not always address occasional misconceptions children may have, including when they write letters the wrong way around. Teachers help children to think about their feelings through well-judged stories. Children's thoughtful responses show how quickly warm and caring relationships are established between staff and children.

There is a new, more rigorous approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff welcome the training that they have had to implement this. Children in the early years start to learn phonics as soon as they start school. They are proud when they can blend the sounds together to read the passwords on the classroom doors. Many pupils who are in the second year and beyond read fluently and with interest. Teachers know what sounds pupils remember and what sounds they do not know. However, the books that some pupils have to read do not always match the sounds that pupils know well enough.

There is a range of specialist staff who teach the pupils some subjects. They skilfully build pupils' knowledge. For example, pupils demonstrate their understanding of dynamics when learning to sing the National Anthem. In swimming lessons, pupils learn to push off and glide with confidence. They enjoy visiting the senior school for their computing lessons. They say that this is 'a big adventure' and feel well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Other subjects are taught by class teachers. The curriculum that they use in mathematics is well organised. Teachers know exactly what pupils need to know and by when. Pupils say that they get lots of chances to recall important knowledge. They know that they need to have their times tables 'at their fingertips'. Some parts of the other subjects that class teachers deliver are not ordered with the same precision.

Staff identify and help children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as soon as they start in the first-year classes. They make sure that they get plenty of help straight away. Teachers work with the special educational needs coordinator to plan how they will support older pupils. Most of these plans identify precise targets so that staff can check that pupils are making progress.

Pupils understand that voting is important. They are delighted by the chance to have their say about which pudding should be on offer at the end of term. Pupils can explain how they help others by bringing in food for the local food bank. Parents praise the support that staff give to each child. They say that the staff go 'above and beyond to understand each child's character'. Pupils have some understanding of different faiths and cultures.

Leaders have made sure that pupils learn that they should treat everyone equally. Pupils know that families can be different. Leaders have prioritised pupils' well-being. Pupils value their yoga lessons and can explain how to keep themselves healthy and happy. Leaders made sure that the extensive site is well maintained and enhances pupils' learning and play.

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school's safeguarding policy is on the school's website. Leaders have ensured that staff understand how to assess risk to keep pupils safe, including when visiting the senior school site. Staff understand what to do to reduce any risk they may identify so that pupils can play safely.

Staff feel that leaders listen to them. They say that leaders value their ideas and help them to manage all the elements of their work. Staff say that leaders support them in their health and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff can explain exactly what signs might make them worried about a child. They do not hesitate to write these down and speak with safeguarding leaders. Leaders work closely with external agencies. They make sure that staff's safeguarding knowledge remains up to date. They check this regularly.

Teachers make sure that pupils know how to stay safe online. Pupils know to 'think, think, think before you click, click, click!' They can explain how to keep themselves safe while crossing a road and why checking for traffic is so important.

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

- Leaders have introduced a more ambitious curriculum in phonics. They have begun to make sure that this is implemented. However, some inconsistencies remain. Occasionally, teachers do not spot pupils' misconceptions. The books used by pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read do not always match the sounds that they know really well. Pupils do not always get the chances that they need to build their knowledge of phonics through their reading books. Leaders should ensure that their approach to the teaching of phonics supports all pupils, particularly those at an early stage of reading, to become fluent, confident readers as quickly as they should.
- In some subjects, leaders have identified the really important knowledge that pupils should know and when more clearly than in others. In those subjects where it is less clear what pupils should learn and when, the curriculum is not sequenced as well as it could be. Leaders should ensure that there is clarity about what knowledge should be taught and in what order across all subjects so that pupils are helped to build on what they have learned before.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	120336
DfE registration number	855/6014
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10232345
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr S and Mrs R Assinder
Headteacher	Mr S and Mrs R Assinder
Annual fees (day pupils)	£10,410
Telephone number	01827 880725
Website	twycrosshouseschool.org.uk
Email address	thehollies@twycrosshouseschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 to 5 July 2018

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provisions.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place on 3 to 5 July 2018.
- The school has an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.

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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the proprietors and the deputy headteacher.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with safeguarding leaders. They met with staff and pupils and considered a range of documents that the school keeps.
- There were deep dives into the following subjects: early reading; mathematics; personal, social and health education; and history. Inspectors spoke with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke with pupils and teachers. They scrutinised samples of pupils' work and other documents that the school provided.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils, both formally and at less structured parts of the day.
- Inspectors met with staff and considered views expressed on the staff survey.
- Inspectors met parents at the beginning of the day and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Hazel Henson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Steven Barnes

Ofsted Inspector

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