

Inspection of The Prepatoria School

7 Park Plaza, Battlefield Enterprise Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 3AF

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 April 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders at the Prepatoria School are determined to provide their pupils with time to laugh, think, listen, play, discuss and learn. The number of pupils in classes is very small, the staff are highly qualified, and the school is open for the majority of the year. As a result, leaders achieve their ambition of giving pupils the time they need to learn.

Leaders are working towards embedding an ambitious curriculum that includes their philosophy of helping pupils to learn through play. They want all pupils to be well prepared for when they leave school in Year 3. This ambition is not yet fully achieved. Some subjects of the curriculum are yet to be developed.

One of the school's core values is mutual respect. Pupils are kind, respect each other, and are happy and safe. They know what bullying is, and staff are vigilant and act quickly to prevent bullying incidents. As a result, behaviour is exemplary in this school, and pupils are ready to learn.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to visit places of interest and have visitors come to the school. For example, pupils enjoyed visiting an iron works museum and talking to visitors about recycling.

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

The school is well led and managed by the proprietor, who has thought carefully about the needs of pupils, their families, and the staff. She shows a commitment to improving standards for all pupils and appoints skilled staff to help her achieve this commitment. The proprietor understands her statutory duties, including those within schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. She ensures the school meets all the independent school standards. The proprietor continually invests in the premises to improve the learning environment. As a result, pupils learn in a stimulating, well-resourced environment.

The leaders mostly realise their vision to provide a broad, high-quality education for all pupils. This is because the curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects, including reading, mathematics, and physical education. In these subjects, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. However, some other curriculum areas, including some in the early years foundation stage, are not yet fully developed. In these subjects, leaders have not given enough thought about the sequence in which they want pupils to learn new knowledge over time. As a result, pupils are not being helped as well as they could be to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas.

All staff in this school ensure that pupils with SEND receive the help they need. Leaders assess the needs of pupils and identify when pupils may need more help. Teachers use these assessments alongside the education, health and care (EHC)

plans to adapt their lessons if necessary. Parents value the help leaders give them to get the right support for their children.

Teachers deliver lessons that foster pupils' independence and integrate physical development and creativity into lessons. All staff take every opportunity to introduce new vocabulary to pupils. They encourage pupils to listen to each other and encourage them to express their thoughts and ideas. Teachers understand the pedagogical principles underpinning this school's ethos. They ensure they plan and deliver lessons that consider these principles. All pupils, including those with SEND, are developing an extensive vocabulary. Pupils confidently express their ideas with their friends and teachers.

Reading is a high priority in this school. The school has a wealth of high-quality books. Staff select books carefully to support the curriculum and interests of pupils. Pupils, including those in early years, start to learn to read as soon as they start school. Staff use the well-planned phonics programme to plan and deliver phonics lessons. These lessons meet the needs of pupils. All pupils make good progress in learning to read.

Assessment is used well in some curriculum areas, such as mathematics and reading. In these subjects, pupils are given regular feedback, and any misconceptions which have arisen are acted upon. Consequently, pupils learn more and remember more. However, in some other subjects, the processes for assessment are not as well developed. This is because leaders have not decided what they will assess and when, or how to identify pupils' starting points. This limits how much pupils learn and remember.

Pupils demonstrate strong attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They listen carefully to and follow the instructions of the staff. The staff use a '1, 2, 3, Magic' approach as a way of warning pupils gently that they need to change their behaviour. Pupils listen and respond quickly to this reminder. As a result, lessons are calm and productive. Attendance at school is very good.

The school provides a vast range of experiences and opportunities. These experiences promote pupils' personal development consistently well. For example, they learn about the life of refugees and raise money for a local refugee charity. Pupils are given some teaching about different faiths and cultures. However, leaders have not provided opportunities for pupils to revisit and build on their learning about different faiths and cultures over time.

Leaders monitor what is happening in school regularly. This monitoring informs any changes they make to what and how teachers teach. Leaders provide extensive professional development opportunities, and staff value these. Staff say that leaders are conscious of workload. The staff appreciate the planning time they have.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding pupils is one of the highest priorities for the proprietor, who is also the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). She ensures that staff have the right training, that they are vigilant to any potential safeguarding concerns and that they maintain an 'it could happen here' approach.

Staff know what to do if they have a concern and the DSL knows how to and does report concerns should she have any.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the personal, social, health and relationships curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, leaders have not fully considered what they want pupils to know and remember, and the order that they want them to learn it in. In these subjects, pupils are not being helped as well as they could be to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas. Leaders should ensure that they identify what pupils need to know and remember, and the order in which they will learn it, for each subject and across each year group.
- In some subjects, assessment is not being used as well as it could be to check pupils' understanding and identify different starting points. As a result, in these subjects, teachers are not clear about what pupils know and can do. Leaders need to develop assessment systems in these subjects and ensure that staff understand how to use these assessment strategies consistently to support their planning.
- Leaders have not given enough thought to the aspects of the school's curriculum that teach pupils about different faiths and cultures. As a result, some pupils are not as aware as they should be of what constitutes modern Britain. Leaders should ensure the curriculum outlines what pupils will learn about different faiths and cultures, the order in which they will learn it in, and put this into practice in order to develop pupils' understanding.

How can I feed back my views?

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

School details

Unique reference number	145478
DfE registration number	893/6035
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10254689
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mrs Jane Smalley
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Smalley and Mrs Charlotte Loach
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,000 to £7,020
Telephone number	01743 460199
Website	www.shrewsburyprepatoria.co.uk
Email address	principal@shrewsburyprepatoria.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–25 October 2018

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school was registered with the Department for Education on 9 May 2018. It opened on 3 September 2018.
- The last standard inspection was in October 2018.
- The school is registered for 20 pupils aged five to seven.
- There are currently nine pupils on roll.
- The school is open for 48 weeks in the year. Pupils are able to take up to nine weeks leave of absence throughout the year.
- The school is located on an enterprise park close to Shrewsbury town centre. The proprietor also operates two early years settings from the business park.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.

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

- Inspectors held meetings the proprietor, the headteachers, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders, teachers, and pupils.
- The lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website and additional documents provided by leaders during the inspection.
- The inspectors made checks of the premises and other information to evaluate compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader. The single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children was scrutinised.

- The inspectors observed pupils at other times of the day to evaluate their behaviour.
- The inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.

Inspection team

Amanda Green, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Johanne Clifton

Ofsted Inspector

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