

Inspection of Prestwich Preparatory School

400 Bury Old Road, Prestwich, Manchester, Lancashire M25 1PZ

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have a strong sense of pride about being part of the Prestwich family. Leaders have successfully created an environment which encourages pupils to be kind, friendly, motivated and independent. Pupils are happy at school.

Leaders expect pupils to achieve well. Children in the early years meet these expectations because the early years curriculum supports children well in their learning. Most pupils are successful at gaining places at local grammar schools for their secondary education. However, the curriculums in many subjects in key stages 1 and 2 do not provide pupils with the essential knowledge that they need to know. Leaders do not make sure that these pupils build on the secure start that they made in the early years.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not well served at this school. Their needs are not accurately identified or assessed. Their barriers to learning are not reduced sufficiently to ensure that they achieve as well as they could.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well. They are attentive in lessons. Pupils are thoughtful and courteous to each other. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Pupils feel safe because they are confident that staff will help them if needed. Any instances of bullying are dealt with effectively.

Pupils make an important contribution to school life through the responsibilities that they take on. For example, pupils are prefects, house captains and representatives on the school's charity and eco-committees.

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

Leaders have begun to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. However, much of this work is new. The curriculums for many subjects are not well designed. In these subjects, leaders have not defined what they want pupils to know or the order that learning should take place. Pupils do not build a deep body of knowledge across a range of subjects. That said, most Year 6 pupils are successful at the grammar school entrance examinations.

In contrast, leaders have created an effective curriculum for children in the early years. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want children to learn across the curriculum. Children in the early years are well prepared for their next steps.

In key stages 1 and 2, teachers do not have the knowledge or confidence to teach some subjects effectively. In part, this is because the curriculum does not offer sufficient guidance. However, some teachers also lack the subject-specific expertise to explain new learning confidently and clearly.

Teachers use assessment information to devise lesson activities. They revisit and recap learning when they identify that pupils have developed misconceptions or have gaps in their understanding.

Reading is extremely important in this school. Pupils have access to a rich and varied selection of books. Regular story times support pupils to develop a love of reading. Pupils said that reading provides them with lots of new knowledge and improves their vocabulary.

Children get off to a good start with learning to read in the early years. They enjoy sharing books, singing songs and rhymes and listening to stories. Children in the Reception Year learn letters and sounds and how to blend them together to read and spell words. Adults in the early years, and key stage 1, are knowledgeable in the teaching of early reading. Pupils who find reading more difficult are well supported by adults. This helps these pupils to catch up quickly. Most pupils learn to read with fluency and confidence by the end of Year 2.

Staff build strong and trusting relationships with the two- and three-year-old children. This, along with well-thought-out activities, enables these children to get off to a strong start. Staff successfully encourage the youngest children to count, play, explore their environment and enjoy the stories that they hear.

Apart from in the early years, where communication and language screenings are routinely completed, the identification of the needs of pupils with SEND is weak. There is a limited range of assessments available for leaders and teachers to draw on. In addition, there is minimal involvement with outside agencies. This prevents leaders and teachers from identifying pupils' needs and barriers to learning. There are some pupils whose additional needs are missed completely.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They listen attentively to their teachers. They are very motivated to do well in school. Lessons are very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders successfully prioritise pupils' personal development. Staff provide pupils with rich opportunities to live out the school's values. Pupils are encouraged to use their own initiative, be self-motivated and grow in independence. Older pupils are always ready to give a helping hand to their younger peers in the playground and around school.

The proprietor body has not ensured that the school complies with the independent school standards (the standards). There are a number of unmet standards in relation to the quality of education, welfare, health and safety and leadership and management.

Leaders do not consistently record behaviour incidents as accurately as they should to allow them to spot any patterns or trends in behaviour.

The proprietor body has ensured that the school is suitably maintained, clean and

appropriately resourced. There is outdoor space for pupils to get fresh air at breaktimes. The outdoor space is also suitable for physical education sessions.

Leaders have ensured that they comply with health and safety requirements and that there are adequate risk assessments in place. They ensure compliance with fire safety regulations.

The school's website has all the required information to keep parents and carers informed. Policies are also available to parents and others on request. The school has a policy that sets out clearly the school's procedures for dealing with any complaints. Leaders have a suitable plan in place that describes how pupils with a disability can take part fully in the school's curriculum.

The proprietor body does not carry out its role effectively. It does not ensure that it has strategic oversight of the work of the school. It does not provide effective challenge and support to school leaders. School leaders are required to fulfil a significant number of key roles within the school, including governance. Leaders do not have the capacity to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. Consequently, there has been a decline in the school's effectiveness.

During the inspection, leaders were given the opportunity to make minor changes to ensure that policies complied with the standards. Despite this, a number of standards remain unmet regarding the quality of education and behaviour management.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel well supported by leaders, including in managing their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The up-to-date safeguarding policy complies with statutory guidance. This policy is published on the school's website.

Leaders and staff are appropriately trained to identify signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff report and record any concerns that they may have about the well-being and safety of pupils.

Leaders are appropriate advocates for all pupils, including vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders engage well with external agencies when needed. Where safeguarding needs are identified, leaders help pupils and their families to get the help and support that they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know what to do if they have a concern about any aspect of their safety and well-being. Staff teach pupils about different risks in a way that is age-appropriate and sensitive. This includes how pupils should deal with any inappropriate content on social media or the internet.

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

- In many subjects, leaders have not considered what pupils should learn. This hinders pupils from achieving as well as they should. Leaders should finalise the curriculum content to ensure that teachers know exactly what knowledge pupils must learn and when they should learn it.
- In some subjects, adults do not have sufficient subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum well. Where this is the case, pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that teachers have the training and support that they need so that they deliver the curriculum well.
- Some pupils with SEND do not have their needs identified, assessed and met effectively. These pupils do not achieve well. Leaders should ensure that pupils' additional needs are identified, assessed and met accurately and quickly.
- Leaders do not keep accurate records of behaviour incidents. Consequently, leaders miss opportunities to identify trends in pupils' behaviour. Leaders should ensure that they keep and use up-to-date and accurate records.
- The proprietor body does not have sufficient oversight of the school. As a result, the school's overall effectiveness has declined since the previous inspection. Pupils' overall achievement is low and a number of the standards are unmet. The proprietor body must carry out its duties effectively so that leaders are held to account for the school's performance. They must ensure that leaders fulfil their statutory responsibilities, meet the standards and improve the quality of education at the school.

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	105997
DfE registration number	351/6012
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10266995
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Proprietor	Friesner Education Limited
Chair	Patricia Shiels
Headteacher	Patricia Shiels
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,394
Telephone number	0161 773 1223
Website	www.prestwichprepschool.net
Email address	friesner@prestwichprepschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 to 14 February 2019

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection was on 12 to 14 February 2019.
- The school offers provision for two-year-old children.
- Until recently, the proprietor body, Friesner Education Limited, managed a separately registered nursery school, Friesner Nurseries. The registration number was EY296663. This operated from the same site as Prestwich Preparatory School and was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2022. In July 2022, the Friesner Nurseries was closed and incorporated into Prestwich Preparatory School. The two provisions are now under one registration.
- The school operates from premises at 400 Bury Old Road, Prestwich, Manchester, Lancashire, M25 1PZ.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The Department for Education commissioned Ofsted to carry out this standard inspection earlier in the cycle than previously planned because of a complaint against the provider.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the headteacher, who is also a trustee of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to the standards, the curriculum, school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's staff survey. During the inspection, inspectors spoke with most members of staff about their well-being and workload. Inspectors also spoke with staff about safeguarding arrangements, pupils' behaviour and bullying.
- There were no responses to the pupil survey. However, inspectors spoke with

most pupils about school life.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects. An inspector also heard pupils read.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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