

Inspection of Gracefield Preparatory School

266 Overndale Road, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 2RG

Inspection dates: 20 to 22 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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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 are happy at Gracefield Preparatory School. Many of them use the word 'fun' when they describe school. They find learning 'interesting and exciting'. Pupils are very proud of their school and work hard. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning.

Pupils say that bullying never happens. However, if pupils 'fall out', the teachers quickly help them to make friends. Pupils know that they can get any help they need by posting a message into the 'worry box'. Pupils describe how staff take action to help them quickly. Pupils say that the school is like 'one big family'. They know each other very well. Pupils are very supportive and tolerant of each other. Those from older year groups support the younger pupils. Pupils say that everyone is kind to each other.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs, activities, trips, drama and sports that are provided within and beyond the school. Throughout the year, charitable events, visitors, enterprise days and religious celebrations occur regularly. These enrich the experience of school life for the pupils. Pupils enthuse about these many diverse experiences.

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

Leaders have given careful thought to the design of the curriculum. It is well structured and identifies the important knowledge that pupils need to know in most subject areas. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to challenge and engage pupils.

Teachers use assessment effectively to identify pupils' learning needs accurately. This informs future learning, which is well adapted to meet the full range of pupils' needs. Teachers are skilful at adapting learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who learn well.

However, in some areas, the curriculum does not define in sufficient detail what pupils need to learn. In addition, the sequence of learning does not always help pupils to remember important knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge well over time in these subjects.

Leaders have established a strong focus on reading across the school. There is a daily story time, which children enjoy. Leaders have implemented an effective phonics programme that follows a well-structured approach. Pupils enjoy reading and use the school's well-stocked library. Teachers listen to children read regularly. As a result, pupils make good progress with their reading.

Over the last few years the school has revised the content and teaching of its personal development curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to reflect in class and they talk knowledgeably about what they have learned. For example, they understand

how to respect people's differences, particularly in religious beliefs. They also show an extensive knowledge of safety, including online safety.

There is a family focus in the school and much mixing across the age groups. Older pupils work with and support each other and the younger pupils. For example, there is a friendship bench and spaces to sit and support each other. There is a kind, caring ethos within the school. Pupils are taught to respect each other. They conduct themselves with consideration for others as they move around the building. Lessons are not disrupted and are calm and orderly. Pupils behave well.

Children in the early years are confident, happy and curious. They know that their questions will be answered. Children enjoy the range of experiences that adults create for their learning. They are confident to try new activities. Children concentrate well, persisting until they have achieved the desired outcome. There is a strong focus on the needs of individual children.

Staff feel well supported by leaders, who ensure that their workload is manageable. They like the family atmosphere and feel that there is a strong sense of mutual support and collaboration among the staff. Leaders are approachable and staff appreciate that they listen to their concerns and act on them. Leaders provide regular well-structured professional development for the staff team.

The proprietor and leaders are ambitious for the school and its children. They consider the school's performance with care and plan what needs to improve. They work together to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met. There is an accessibility plan in place. All required policies are available on the school's website. These include the safeguarding and child protection policy. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders work closely with parents, who they support as co-educators. They maintain good communication with parents, who express very positive views on the school and its work with their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders hold the safeguarding and well-being of pupils as a high priority. They provide regular, high-quality training for staff. This ensures that staff are fully aware of their responsibilities for keeping children safe. Staff know how to raise any concerns and what to expect as a result. Children are well known in the school and there are clear, simple systems that support their well-being. Records are detailed and demonstrate how promptly leaders act on concerns. Leaders ensure that the appropriate checks are made on all staff. Leaders have received training to ensure that they recruit staff who are suitable to work with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The important knowledge that pupils need to know has not been identified in some areas of the curriculum. Learning is not structured well enough in these areas and some pupils do not build their knowledge as well as they could over time. Leaders should review these areas of the curriculum, clearly defining the knowledge that pupils need to know.

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	109343
DfE registration number	801/6009
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10267598
Type of school	Other Independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Morgan Education Ltd
Headteacher	James Gunter
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7, 281.00
Telephone number	0117 9567977
Website	www.gracefieldschool.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@gracefieldschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 to 21 March 2019

Information about this school

- Gracefield is an independent primary school for girls and boys aged from 4 to 11 years.
- Situated in Fishponds in the east of the city of Bristol, the school occupies a detached Victorian house.
- The school opened in 1950 and is registered for 112 pupils.
- The school is currently organised into seven classes, one for each year group.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with the proprietor.
- Inspectors examined the school's arrangements for safeguarding by meeting with the designated safeguarding lead. They scrutinised policies, procedures and record-keeping and reviewed the safeguarding checks made on staff when they are recruited. They also spoke with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, music and early reading. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work, and held discussions with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils around the school site, talked with them during lessons and met with them individually.
- Inspectors met with a group of girls and with a group of girls and boys.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including policies and record-keeping for behaviour management, incidents, exclusions and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Malcolm Willis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Hilary Goddard

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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