



Office for Standards
in Education

Stoneygate School

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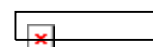
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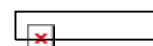
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School details

Introduction and summary

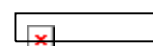


Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



Stoneygate School was established in the early nineteenth century and is privately owned. It is a multi-racial, independent co-educational day school with 319 pupils aged between three and thirteen. The school does not select pupils by ability.

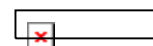
Before September 2003, the pupils in Years 4 to 8 were located in buildings in Leicester City with nursery to Year 3 pupils residing in accommodation at Great Glen. The closure of the upper school at the end of the summer term 2003 resulted in the move of the older pupils to purpose-built modern accommodation at Great Glen. The school is now on one site.

The philosophy of the school is outlined in the prospectus which states:

'Our primary concern is to provide a warm, happy and stimulating atmosphere where every child is valued and enjoys coming to school'.

'We aim to realise the full potential of all our pupils by introducing them to a range of subjects and experiences at an early age'.

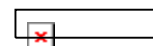
Summary of main findings



Stoneygate School has a number of strengths. However, several areas have yet to be addressed before the school complies fully with regulations, particularly with regard to the health and safety of pupils.

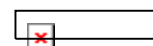
The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and there is very effective specialist teaching in a number of subjects. The curriculum is broad and is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. It is imbalanced in that it lacks sufficient time and opportunities for extended writing in English and other subjects. Relations are very good throughout the school and are reflected in the evident racial harmony. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good but more could be done to develop their understanding of other cultures and lifestyles. Pupils are happy, secure and enjoy coming to school. The school is successful in helping pupils achieve places in their chosen senior school.

What the school does well



- the quality of teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and never less than satisfactory overall. The specialist teaching of music, French and art is a strength of the school;
- the curriculum is broad and is enriched by an impressive programme of extra-curricular activities;
- it is successful in creating an environment where pupils of different backgrounds relate well to each other and to staff;
- pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good;
- the quality of accommodation is good overall and corridors and classroom walls are made attractive by well-presented displays of pupils' work and achievements; and
- it has the confidence and support of parents.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations



- establish an effective framework to assess and record pupils' attainments and ensure that teachers take this information into account in their planning;
- rectify all outstanding health and safety issues identified in section 3; and
- ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on non-teaching staff before their appointment as indicated in section 4.

What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act:

☐

- the school should devise a three-year written plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

Next steps

☐

Whilst not specifically required by the regulations, the school may wish to consider the following points in its endeavours for further improvement:

- reduce the reliance on worksheets and increase the variety of writing and problem solving work;
- increase the time allocated for writing and the opportunities to develop literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum; and
- widen the range and quality of learning resources to reflect the multi-racial nature of society.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

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1. The quality of education provided by the school

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The quality of the curriculum

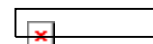
☐

The curriculum is broad and the school provides very effective specialist teaching in subjects such as music, art and French. Pupils achieve well in these areas. The curriculum is significantly enriched by an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities which provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop their academic, cultural, artistic and sporting skills. The curriculum is also enhanced by educational visits and visitors to the school. However, it is imbalanced in that it lacks sufficient time and opportunities for pupils to write at length and across a range of genres. Literacy skills are also not being developed as well as they might across the curriculum because of the over-use of prescriptive worksheets that hinder independent work.

The school prospectus provides a suitable statement of its curriculum aims and information about the subjects taught in school. There is a range of curriculum documentation that effectively informs lesson planning and syllabus coverage. Curriculum statements for each year group are sent to all parents prior to the start of each new school year. The curriculum in the nursery and reception

provides well for pupils' needs and prepares them effectively for the next stage of their education.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and never less than satisfactory overall. The specialist teaching of music, French and art is very effective in helping pupils progress well in these subjects.

The teaching of three, four and five year olds is good and pupils achieve well. The staff have a good understanding of the provision required in the Foundation Stage. They plan a broad range of learning experiences that enables pupils to make good progress in their learning, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. The level of challenge is realistic although the more able in the nursery could, on occasions, be stretched more. Staff help pupils to feel secure and gain confidence. They are sensitive to pupils' needs and support them well. Staff use positive strategies to manage and develop behaviour with the result that behaviour is usually good. Pupils in the nursery behave well in small group sessions but they are not always so responsive in large groups and at times do not show sufficient care and concern for others.

In the very best lessons teaching is stimulating, enthusiastic and consistently challenging. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject matter they are covering. Teaching methods and activities are well selected and the lessons move along at a brisk pace. Very good relations are established and pupils are expected to work hard and give of their best.

Other lessons reflect some common weaknesses. On occasions there is insufficient challenge for different groups of pupils, particularly the more able. Activities are mundane and work does not capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Lessons are too directed by the teacher, and there is an over-use of worksheets to facilitate learning. As a result, there are too few opportunities for pupils to think and learn for themselves.

Most teaching seen was satisfactorily planned with clear learning objectives for the lessons, although these were not always shared with the pupils. The school lacks a consistent approach to lesson planning while it is satisfactory overall, it is of variable quality.

Pupils from Year 4 onwards have 'prep' classes after school. These sessions make a valuable contribution to developing pupils' learning and concentration skills and their capacity to work independently.

The relationship that teachers and assistants have with pupils is very good and praise is used well to promote learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school and concentrate well.

Resources for learning are adequate and are effectively used. The number of books in the new library is being increased and the range broadened. The book stock in the junior library is limited and needs updating, particularly the fiction and reference books reflecting life in a multi-cultural society.

The school uses standardised, national and school-based tests to measure pupils' levels of attainment. Procedures are in place to review the progress made by three, four and five year olds against national expectations. However, results are not analysed or interpreted effectively enough to determine the progress made by pupils within each phase of the school. There is a lack of consistency in how assessment is used to inform teachers' planning. Pupils' work is marked regularly although much takes the form of ticks, marks, grades and brief comments. There are too few constructive comments to help pupils improve their performance.

The vast majority of parents who filled in the pre-inspection questionnaires felt that they were well informed about their children's progress.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

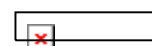
No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that all teachers take pupils' needs, aptitudes and prior attainment into account when planning lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d)); and
- implement a coherent framework to measure how well pupils achieve in each stage and to ensure the needs of different groups of pupils are reflected in the planning of all teachers (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The contribution the school makes to developing pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Its contribution to their cultural development is satisfactory. The curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of their own culture and other cultures. Work in religious studies, history and geography helps pupils to become aware of cultural diversity. However, more needs to be done to extend pupils' cultural knowledge in other subjects, to reinforce the school's multi-cultural values through displays, posters and partnerships with outside bodies.

There is a calm, happy, purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils are treated with respect and are valued equally. They behave very well in classrooms and around the school and its attractive site showing a delight in, and respect for, the environment.

Pupils' spiritual development is fostered effectively through assemblies, hymn practice and form periods. Religious studies provide a number of opportunities for pupils to explore religious values and beliefs and the way they affect peoples' lives. The school is successful in the establishment of an ethos within which pupils develop a respect for themselves and a sense of empathy, concern and compassion for others.

The provision for moral education is good. The curriculum stresses the importance of right and wrong and pupils have a very secure moral framework that influences and regulates their personal behaviour. The staff provide excellent role models and helpfully develop pupils' understanding of the school's shared and agreed values. Class rules are clear and require pupils to behave in a moral way and to understand and obey school rules. Pupils are taught self-control and self-discipline in a variety of ways, particularly through sport and 'prep' work. Pupils are frequently engaged in activities aimed at raising funds for local and national charities. The school fête, which took place during the inspection, provided an excellent example of pupils exercising responsibility through enthusiastic participation in a successful community event.

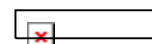
Provision for pupils' social development is also good. Pupils are taught and encouraged to respect each other and to show concern for younger pupils. As they grow older, they take on a range of important responsibilities such as form or team captains and prefect duties. Relationships, including race relations, are very good throughout the school. The pupils respond well to social events such as the school fête and sports days. Pupils' personal qualities and social skills are extended by the Adventure Service Challenge (ASC) programme that all Year 7 pupils follow. Sport and games provision helps pupils work effectively as a member of a group or team.

Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There are regular educational visitors and visits, including trips abroad. The religious studies, geography, history and English programmes of study all make reference to cultural and religious diversity to a greater or lesser extent. Within religious studies, there is an emphasis on a multi-faith approach. However, while the curriculum makes a contribution to education for ethnic and cultural diversity, it is an aspect which is in relatively low profile across the curriculum. Some opportunities are missed to further develop pupils' cultural awareness. The pupils have good access to creative subjects through the arts and music and also through participation in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. There are regular concerts and school performances including an arts festival.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school has a satisfactory range of policies relating to pupils' health, welfare and safety. Staff care for the welfare of the pupils, who feel safe in school. A satisfactory written health and safety policy is in place and clear procedures exist for conducting activities outside school. However, no formal risk assessments are carried out to identify potential sources of danger or security risks in school. The outcomes of informal checks are not recorded. Annual checks are made on items of electrical equipment. However, the school does not keep an up-to-date equipment register; therefore, there is no guarantee that when the check is undertaken all electrical items are subject to inspection.

A fire risk assessment was undertaken in September 2003, followed by a review in May 2004. A formal record was made of the first report's findings and work was carried out effectively to improve fire safety. However, the school has not complied with a number of the recommendations in the fire officer's report. Emergency lighting has not been tested monthly; the fire alarm system has not been tested weekly; fire resisting doors in the manor house do not remain closed and are often wedged open; 'push bar signs' have not been provided above the panic bar devices within the new building. Regular fire drills are undertaken and a record kept in line with regulations.

A number of other health and safety matters were drawn to the school's attention for urgent action. These included the possibility of pupils' access, in various locations, to machinery, chemicals and cleaning agents, and of their access to the swimming pool and pond; a fire exit was obstructed; and the use of shared fabric hand towels in the toilet areas for younger pupils presented a hygiene risk.

The school has an appropriate child protection policy. The headteacher is the designated member of staff responsible for co-ordinating action and liaising with agencies. Most staff have received training with regard to their duties and responsibilities for this role. The behaviour policy is clear and specifies the sanctions to be used in the event of misbehaviour.

The school has a satisfactory First Aid policy. The school matron oversees and ensures that procedures are effectively implemented. All accidents are recorded properly and a number of staff are suitably trained to deal with accidents and injuries. The pupils are supervised adequately inside the school and at all times in the nursery. However, there is insufficient supervision of reception and Year 1 and 2 pupils when they are outside during break and lunchtimes.

The school maintains an admission register but it does not contain up-to-date, accurate information about each pupil in the school. Attendance registers are taken at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions but not all distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence and corrections are not always made in such a way that the original entry is clearly distinguishable.

The school has not yet drawn up a three year plan of action to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that thorough health and safety risk assessments are undertaken for the school premises and grounds (paragraph 3(4));
- ensure an electrical equipment register is kept and all items on the inventory are subject to an annual electrical check by a qualified person (paragraph 3(4));
- ensure that emergency lighting and fire alarm systems are tested within the recommended intervals, and a formal record kept (paragraph 3(5));
- improve the level of supervision of the reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils during break and lunchtimes (paragraph 3(7)); and
- ensure attendance and admission registers are completed correctly (paragraph 3(9)).

Does the school comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 2002?

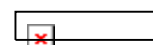
No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act?

In order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act the school should:

- devise a three-year written plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The school is privately owned. The proprietor manages the school's financial affairs and oversees health and safety matters, including fire safety.

The proprietor has been subject to a check with the CRB and he is registered to arrange CRB checks on new staff and volunteers to confirm their suitability to work with children. All teaching staff have been subject to a CRB or Department for Education and Skills (DfES) clearance prior to their appointment. However, there are some non-teaching staff who are working under contract at the school who have not been subject to a CRB check. Appropriate procedures are in place to check new staff being appointed to confirm their previous employment history, medical fitness, qualifications and professional references.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets nearly all the requirements.

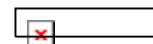
What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school

should:

- ensure that, prior to their appointment, all staff have been subject to a check with the CRB to confirm their suitability to work with children (paragraph 4(b)).

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school is housed in an Elizabethan style manor house with an adjoining stable block and new purpose-built premises. Four classes are in mobile classrooms. The school has a hall and an outdoor pool area that is used for swimming in the summer months.

The new building is in an attractive modern style. The classrooms, changing areas, laboratories, office and reception area are of very good quality. Classrooms in other parts of the school are generally of an appropriate size and corridors and classroom walls are made attractive by well-presented displays of pupils' work and achievements. The flooring, furniture and equipment are suited to the age and needs of the pupils. The narrow staircase to the art room is potentially hazardous.

Overall the school is in good decorative order and is clean and tidy. The school grounds are extensive, attractive and well maintained. There are adequate facilities for dining and food preparation. The kitchen is kept in a hygienic state and plans are in place to implement the recommendations made in the very recent Environmental Health report. There are two medical rooms providing good facilities for sick or injured pupils. The playground and school grounds are of a good size for the number of pupils using them. The garden and seating areas are of good quality. There are plenty of shaded areas to protect pupils from the sun.

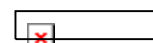
The book stock in the junior library is limited and needs updating particularly its multi-cultural resources.

There are a number of health and safety issues related to the premises, which inspectors drew to the headteacher and proprietor's attention.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The ethos and aims of the school are clear and well communicated to pupils, parents and prospective parents. The school brochure provides a satisfactory amount of detail about the school. It has been supplemented by the insertion of useful and important additional papers dealing with all statutory requirements. All parents are sent informative 'Welcome' documents prior to the beginning of each school year which give a clear and detailed picture of the curriculum and other work to be covered during the academic year.

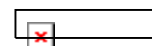
Parents are pleased with the level of information provided by the school, both about the school and its work, and their children's progress. Parents receive regular newsletters, and useful information about administrative and other important aspects of school life. There are two parents' evenings

each school year and termly reports keep parents suitably informed about their children's progress. Parents have ready access to teachers on a daily basis to discuss any issues which might arise. Parents who responded to the questionnaire sent out to them before the inspection, showed a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

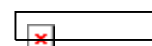


The school has recently revised its written policy and procedures for handling complaints, which have been given to all parents. These meet all the requirements.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	Stoneygate School		
DfES ref number:	855/6002		
Type of school:	Day School		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	3-13 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 172,	Girls 133,	Total 305
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 7,	Girls 7,	Total 14
Number of boarders:	Boys 0,	Girls 0,	Total 0
Annual fees (day pupils):	£4,440 - £6,975		

Address of school:	£2,373 Nursery - mornings only
	London Road
	Great Glen
	Leicestershire
	LE8 9DJ

E-mail address:	stoneygate@webleicester.co.uk
Telephone number:	01162 592282
Fax number:	01162 592176
Headteacher:	Mr John Morris
Proprietor:	Mr Jeremy Josephs
Lead Inspector:	Mr David Rzeznik HMI
Dates of inspection:	28 June - 1 July 2004

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