

Twycross House Pre-Preparatory School

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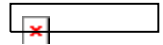
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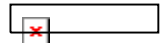
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Introduction and summary

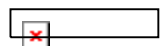


Purpose and scope of the inspection



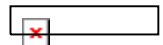
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



The school opened in 1982 and is situated in the village of Twycross in Leicestershire. It is housed in the Georgian home of the owners, who are also the joint headteachers. There are 156 boys and girls on roll aged between four and eight. There are many more boys than girls in each year group. Entrance is by selection and most of the pupils proceed to the nearby senior school. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. Sixty-four pupils are identified as having special educational needs, including fourteen designated as having dyslexia. No pupil has a formal statement. The aim of the school is that 'children should have the opportunity to develop at an appropriate pace with due regard to their abilities'.

Summary of main findings



Twycross House Pre-Preparatory is a good, very well equipped school. It has many good features and no significant weaknesses. It is successful in educating pupils to a high standard. It provides a satisfactory curriculum and the quality of the teaching is good. The ethos of the school is very

positive and the pupils develop very good attitudes to learning.

What the school does well

- the pupils make very good progress and attain high standards;
- the pupils are very well cared for and their personal development is promoted effectively. They are polite and their behaviour is exemplary. They enjoy being part of a small community; and
- it provides very good accommodation and it is well staffed and resourced.

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

- comply fully with the newly introduced requirements for the training of staff responsible for child protection as set out in section 3 of this report.

Next steps

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- introduce procedures for tracking and monitoring the progress pupils make during their time at the school; and
- give greater emphasis to the teaching of information and communication technology.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school

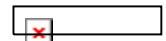
The quality of the curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. The school curriculum policy is to create 'a happy atmosphere...a pleasant and caring environment within which children can develop to their fullest, their academic ability, physical skills, aesthetic qualities and social awareness'. To a large extent this aim is met. It also states that measures are taken to 'ensure that multicultural, racial equality, disability and equal opportunity issues are considered and dealt with in an appropriate manner. This aspiration, too, is achieved. There are schemes of work for most relevant National Curriculum subjects based upon national guidelines or commercial publications. There are lessons in religious education and French for all pupils. The curriculum provides appropriate opportunities for the pupils to be given experience in all the required areas of learning although the technological aspects of the curriculum are underemphasised. Information and communication technology is not taught as a discrete subject and has only limited use in other subjects. Pupils in the youngest classes are taught a curriculum that is defined mainly in National Curriculum subject terms but which conforms to the nationally agreed Foundation Stage areas of learning.

There is a good emphasis on the development of the pupils' oral, literacy and numeracy skills. There is no structured programme of personal, social and health education; it is the school's policy to address such issues through topic areas as and when appropriate for the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs receive adequate extra support in small groups from a part-time specialist teacher and a member of the school's staff.

It is the school's policy not to provide extra-curricular activities, although instrumental tuition in piano and violin is available and the school organises summer schools at which a wide range of sporting and art activities are offered. The generous staffing levels enable the school to provide mainly good quality specialist teaching for music, French, physical education, and swimming. There are regular theme days such as a Viking day for Year 3 pupils when pupils dress up as Vikings and re-enact aspects of life in that period.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching but there was also little that was very good.

Teachers know the pupils very well and this contributes to the very good relationships that exist between them. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning which enables them to make good progress. Clear explanations and instructions are a common feature of the teaching throughout the school and pupils are aware of what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Teachers employ sound questioning skills to ascertain pupils' knowledge although this does not often probe and challenge their thinking further.

The better lessons are characterised by an enthusiastic approach, tasks which encourage pupils' motivation and enjoyment, and efficient use of time. Where teaching is only satisfactory, this is often due to pupils spending too long queuing at the teacher's desk. This is an ineffective use of time and is unnecessary as many pupils are capable of moving onto the next task independently.

The staff provide a stimulating learning environment for the pupils with high quality displays around the school. Resources in the school are very good and teachers make effective use of these to support learning.

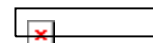
The school uses appropriate systems to check the pupils' attainment, including some standardised tests which measure pupils' standards against national norms. In a minority of classes, these assessments are used effectively as running records which teachers act upon to provide additional support in specific areas for those pupils who need it. However, assessments are not used well

enough to track pupils' progress over time or set targets for improvement. The quality of marking is sound. The better examples of teachers' marking include evaluative comments which help pupils understand how well they are doing and show them how to improve.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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



The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. There is a pleasant and homely atmosphere, pupils enjoy coming to school and are happy. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive and the pupils respond by trying hard and behaving very well. Pupils are encouraged to value each other's individuality. They willingly take on responsibilities and have a good sense of fairness. They understand the importance of knowing right from wrong.

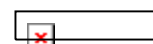
Spiritual awareness is raised mainly through assemblies and religious education. Pupils visit a local church as part of their scripture studies and the vicar has visited the school to talk to pupils. There is a strong emphasis on supporting charities and helping others. This encourages pupils to consider the circumstances of others less fortunate than themselves.

Pupils are encouraged to appreciate cultural diversity and respect the values and beliefs of others. At an appropriate level for the age of the pupils, this is achieved through the school's programme of religious education, and subjects such as art, history and geography. For example, as part of the Chinese New Year celebrations the pupils observed a demonstration of Chinese painting and writing which led to them producing their own pieces of art work. A few visits to museums or other places of interest help to extend pupils' awareness of cultural heritage.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school makes very good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. A range of policies and procedures provide guidance for all aspects of pupils' welfare. The staff are very caring, know the pupils well and provide them with a safe and secure environment. Pupils are closely supervised at all times on the school premises. The school's admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the regulations.

Risk assessments are undertaken for all visits. Appropriate records of pupils with special medical conditions or need are kept and made known to relevant staff. Accidents are recorded, and there are sufficient members of staff qualified in First Aid. Appropriate provision is made for the care of sick pupils.

The school makes good provision for fire safety. There are regular fire drills, appliances are checked and fire risk assessments carried out. Potential safety hazards are reported

conscientiously and action is taken to minimise these or carry out necessary repairs and maintenance as quickly as possible.

The headteachers have designated responsibility for child protection and all staff are aware of the appropriate guidelines. The designated persons for child protection have not yet undertaken training to a standard set by the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC). This is now required as a result of recently-introduced legislation.

The school is committed to reviewing its facilities should a disabled child be admitted to school and there is an appropriate three-year development plan to meet this requirement. Recent extensions and additions to the school buildings are accessible to disabled people.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

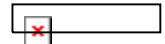
The school meets all the requirements except one.

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:

- implement fully Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance: 'Safeguarding Children in Education' which states that the designated person must undertake training to a standard set by the ACPC (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

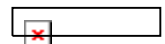


All members of staff have had the appropriate Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and List 99 checks. At the time of the inspection, the results of a CRB check were awaited for one recent appointee. Reasonable steps are taken to confirm the identity, previous employment records and qualifications of applicants prior to their employment.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school is housed in attractive two-storey premises which were originally a farmhouse. Over the years these have been renovated, extended and refurbished to an exceptionally high standard, providing purpose-built classrooms, an assembly hall, dining room, art room and separate buildings which house a swimming pool and a sports hall.

The premises are very well maintained, clean and welcoming. Classrooms and shared areas are tidy, well-organised and enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. These rooms are adequate in size for the number of pupils, with suitable furniture and fittings. They are equipped with a good range of resources for teaching and learning. The facilities for preparation, serving and consumption

of food are very good. These have recently been upgraded in a new section of the building.

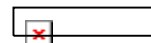
There is sufficient outdoor space for pupils to play safely. The main playground, a tennis court, has a suitable surface and is enclosed. There are attractive gardens and a recently constructed greenhouse area which is to be used by groups of pupils under supervision. The sports hall has a high quality sprung floor. It is shared, along with the swimming pool, with pupils of the adjacent Twycross House School.

A one-way vehicular access route is organised very efficiently by the caretaker, enabling parents to bring and collect their children in safety. However, a few parents disregard the rules which state where and how they should do this. They therefore risk jeopardising the safety of their and other children.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



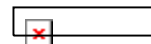
The school meets all the regulations regarding the information provided for parents. Prospective parents are given a leaflet with information about the school and its proprietors, the curriculum and the various policies in place. There is regular and frequent contact between the staff and parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day. There are two parent/teacher consultations in the Autumn and Summer terms. A very large majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire reported that they were happy with the information they receive from the school and feel welcome there.

The school provides a written report on each pupil at the end of each year. This contains information on the work they have covered and on their progress and attainment in each subject taught. It does not give the results of tests or assessments.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

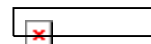


The school has a clear and succinct complaints procedure that allows for a complaint to be made and considered on an informal basis initially. There are appropriate formal procedures in place to ensure that complaints are considered objectively. The policy is available to parents on request. The headteachers report that the formal stages have never needed to be invoked.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	Twycross House Pre-Preparatory School		
DfES ref number:	855/6014		
Type of school:	Pre-preparatory		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	4 - 8 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 94,	Girls 62,	Total 156
Annual fees (day pupils):	£5,250		
Address of school:	The Hollies, The Green Twycross, Atherstone Warwickshire CV9 3PQ		
E-mail address:	twycrosshousepreprepschool@ehotspot.co.uk		
Telephone number:	01827 880725		
Fax number:	01827 880725		
Headteachers:	Mr S and Mrs R T Assinder		
Proprietors:	Mr S and Mrs R T Assinder		
Lead Inspector:	Mr Iain Rodger		
Dates of inspection:	7 - 10 March 2005		

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