

Stoneygate School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	855/6002
Unique Reference Number	120325
Inspection number	322255
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Stoneygate is an independent day school for boys and girls aged 3–13 years. It is privately owned and is located at Great Glen on the outskirts of Leicester. Although the school is not selective, prospective pupils undergo assessments to ensure that the school is likely to be suitable and to assist with placing them in a form suited to their ability.

The school aims, *'to realise the full potential of all our pupils by introducing them to a broad range of subjects and experiences at an early stage'*.

The school is registered for 363 pupils and there are currently 335 full time pupils and 28 part time pupils on roll. The school opened in 1853 and was last inspected by Ofsted in July 2004. The Early Years provision, which is part of the school, is registered separately and was inspected in October 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Stoneygate is a happy and harmonious school which provides a good standard of education for its pupils. They are full of praise for their school and particularly enjoy the friendliness and the good range of extra-curricular activities available. The school has taken effective action to address weaknesses identified at the last inspection. As a result the quality of teaching and the curriculum have improved and pupils are now making good progress in their learning. The school meets nearly all of the requirements for registration.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and meets the needs of the pupils well. In Years 1 to 8 the curriculum covers all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are also well planned for. There is a strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills. Teachers in the Foundation Stage follow national guidance when planning activities for their pupils. Since the last inspection the school has improved planning for the development of writing skills across the curriculum. The success of this is evident in the quality of pupils' writing throughout the school. Provision for the teaching of foreign languages is a particular strength. All pupils learn French from Year 2 and those who are more able study Latin from Year 5. In addition, pupils in

Year 8 learn German. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the good opportunities they have to participate in music, drama and sport. There are very good opportunities for pupils of differing abilities to participate in competitive sport against other schools.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good, enabling pupils to make good progress. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations and these are clearly shared with the pupils. Teachers use their good subject knowledge very well to plan lessons which are interesting. They make effective use of appropriate technical vocabulary in subjects such as science, mathematics, music and geography. Most lessons move on at a brisk pace and teachers use questioning effectively to assess pupils' understanding, challenge their thinking and extend their learning. Activities are usually the same for every pupil in a teaching group, regardless of their ability. As a result, some pupils rely heavily on the good level of adult support available to enable them to learn effectively while others are not extended as much as they could be. However, a wide range of scholarship and extension groups provide further opportunities for many pupils. Most activities in lessons are quite prescriptive. As a result, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn independently or develop their understanding by working collaboratively with others. Pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning and respond well to the activities, even on the few occasions where these have not been well planned or do not provide sufficient challenge. Work is usually marked and, at its best, this provides helpful guidance to enable the pupils to improve their work. However, this good practice is not consistently evident throughout the school.

The school has satisfactory systems in place to monitor the progress made by pupils and to compare this to national norms. The results of these assessments, along with the work seen in lessons and pupils' books, indicate that the majority of pupils make good progress. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening, music, and sport are particularly high. The school prepares pupils well for when they move on and pupils are very successful in obtaining places at their chosen senior schools.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school places a strong focus on building pupils' confidence and raising their self-esteem. The success of this is increasingly evident as pupils move through the school. They say that they enjoy lessons and they demonstrate this in their enthusiasm for their work and other activities. Levels of attendance are very high. There are excellent relationships between pupils and adults and between the pupils themselves. These give rise to a relaxed but very productive learning environment. Behaviour is good. Pupils have a firm understanding of the difference between right and wrong and are strongly aware of the impact of their behaviour on others.

Pupils are keen to take on responsibility. Older pupils act as mentors to younger ones and members of the school council contribute their opinions on matters they would like to see changed. For example, they were consulted about the lunch and tea

menus. Many pupils help to organise fund raising activities for charities. Others become team captains and many represent their school in sporting fixtures. School assemblies strongly support all aspects of pupils' personal development. They provide opportunities for reflection and have spiritual, moral and cultural themes which are often continued in lessons. Pupils gain confidence because of the considerable contributions they make to the success of assemblies. They gain a good understanding of different cultures through the curriculum and a range of local visits.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. Whilst the school has satisfactory procedures in place to ensure pupils' welfare and health, a small number are not fully implemented. For example, the child protection officer only works part time. The school is aware of this and has recently arranged for a full-time member of staff to be trained in order to fully meet the requirements. The school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies are of good quality and are effectively implemented. Pupils say that they are not harassed and if they have a concern it is dealt with effectively. Regular risk assessments of the accommodation are undertaken. However, some potentially unsafe elements have not been eliminated. For example, there are unsecured windows on the upper floors, unprotected fluorescent lights and pupils move around the car park and the main access roads unsupervised before school and between lessons. The school is aware of these issues and is taking steps to further improve pupils' safety. There is an appropriate policy and suitable risk assessments for educational visits both locally and for trips abroad. A fire officer's report from 2004 indicates a satisfactory level of fire safety. Fire drills are regularly carried out and fire-fighting equipment is routinely tested to ensure it is fully operational.

The admissions register has recently been improved to meet current requirements. The school keeps attendance registers but does not use the correct codes to indicate why pupils have been absent. The school has drawn up a three year accessibility plan for disabled students and fully complies with its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has appropriate procedures in place relating to the checks it makes on prospective employees and volunteers regarding their identity, qualifications, medical fitness and suitability to work with children. However, the school's comprehensive records indicate that, on one recent occasion, these checks were not completed before the employee took up their post.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is housed in a series of buildings in extensive grounds which provide a suitable range of indoor and outdoor facilities. Provision for outdoor sports has been

improved since the last inspection through the purchase of an additional grassed area. The indoor accommodation is clean and well maintained. There are a number of specialist rooms including those for science, music, information and communication technology and art and there is also a school hall and a library. Some of the specialist rooms such as the music rooms and the hall are small and this restricts their use. The hall is too small to be used for physical education activities.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides detailed information for parents and carers through its prospectus and yearbooks. There are suitable opportunities for parents and carers to discuss their children's progress and the school has responded to parents' requests by increasing the frequency of these for the older pupils. The twice yearly written reports fulfil the requirements to keep parents and carers informed about their children's attainment and progress. The school does not send to the local authority (LA) an annual account of the income received and the expenditure incurred by the school for pupils whose education is wholly or partly funded by the LA.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clearly written and fair complaints procedure which meets the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that there is always a designated member of staff for child protection on site and that he or she is suitably trained to comply with DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- make improvements to premises and procedures in order that the school can demonstrate that it has due regard to the DCSF guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (DCSF 0803/2001) (paragraph 3(4))
- maintain attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff ensure that all the required checks about suitability to work with children have been made by the proprietor (paragraph 4(2)(b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of pupils funded by local authorities and submit these accounts to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 6(7)).

School details

Name of school	Stoneygate School		
DCSF number	855/6002		
Unique reference number	120325		
Type of school	Preparatory Day School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1853		
Age range of pupils	3–13		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 179	Girls: 156	Total: 335
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 16	Girls: 12	Total: 28
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 5700 - £8970		
Address of school	6 London Road Great Glen Leicester Leicestershire LE8 9DJ		
Telephone number	0116 2592282		
Fax number	0116 2592176		
Email address	school@stoneygateschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	John Morris		
Proprietor	Jeremy Josephs		
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI		
Dates of inspection	29–30 April 2008		