

# Twycross House Pre-Preparatory School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	855/6014
Unique Reference Number	120336
Inspection number	329430
Inspection dates	2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne 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). The inspection of childcare was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focussed principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

## Information about the school

The school accommodation comprises of several specially adapted Georgian and Victorian houses nestled around the village green in the Leicestershire village of Twycross. The grounds are extensive with purpose built sports hall, hard surface tennis court, swimming pool, school hall and classrooms. The sports facilities are shared with the neighbouring senior school, which is under the same ownership, and the preferred destination of most pupils. The owners, who are also the joint headteachers, live on the school site.

The school is registered for pupils between the ages of four and eight years of age. The curriculum for the four and five-year-olds follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There are currently 148 pupils in total attending the school. A small number of pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although there are currently no pupils who have a statement of special educational need. No pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school's aims are: *'to encourage children within a calm purposeful environment, allowing them to develop socially and grow in confidence, developing a sense of right and wrong.'* The school ethos is to ensure *'that children have the opportunity to develop at an appropriate pace with due regard to their abilities.'* Entrance is by selection in the January prior to admission. Pupils attend from a very wide catchment area.

## Evaluation of the school

Twycross House Pre-Preparatory, affectionately known as "The Hollies", is a well established school providing a good quality of education for all its pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A very committed staff and leadership team ensure that the school is a happy place to be, with strong support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. They grow in confidence through a well balanced curriculum which successfully develops them emotionally, physically and

intellectually. Pupils are well prepared for moving on to the next part of their education. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and so are the pupils. The school meets all of the independent school regulations.

## Quality of education

The overall quality of education is good. This is because of the dedication of the joint headteachers and staff combined with the very positive ethos of the school, which enables every pupil to flourish. The curriculum is good overall and the school rightly recognises the necessity for making improvements in information and communication technology (ICT), which are beginning to be addressed. The programme of study in Years 1 to 3 broadly follows the National Curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of additional subjects and specialist teaching, for example in physical education, music and French, where lessons are of a high quality. All pupils gain from regular swimming lessons. There are numerous visits outside school and regular visitors to the school to add curriculum interest. The school is very well resourced in terms of its accommodation and classroom resources. The curriculum for the younger children is broad. It is based effectively on all six areas of learning as outlined in the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is adapted well according to children's interests and needs. Pupils make good progress towards the early learning goals, which they usually exceed, by the end of the Reception Year.

The school places strong emphasis on the core skills of literacy and numeracy. It also helps pupils to achieve well in science. The school is developing a more creative curriculum which embraces several subject areas, although the foundation subjects are not covered as thoroughly in the curriculum documentation. The school has more to do in ensuring that there are agreed learning objectives in each subject area.

The quality of teaching and assessment is usually good. In the most successful lessons, the pace is good and pupils learn in enjoyable and practical ways. They get down to active learning quickly, which engages their interest well. There are systems in place to assess pupils regularly, although currently the staff choose not to assess pupils against the National Curriculum levels. There is some work scrutiny but the school recognises that it would be helpful to build further on this practice to inform future planning. Class teachers know pupils very well and, because of small class sizes, they are able to offer very good quality individual support where necessary. This has a particularly significant impact on pupils' progress in core skills. For example, pupils' reading ages are often well beyond their chronological ages.

Staff have high expectations for both behaviour and standards of work. This is made clear to pupils, although currently lesson objectives are not shared with pupils, nor are they given targets to aim for which they can be measured against. The breadth of abilities within the class is provided for in most classes effectively, although occasionally more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to think independently. Work in books is always marked thoroughly but provides too few pointers for

development. Pupils who are struggling are identified early and are given appropriate support. Teaching assistants are used well in this respect. This means that pupils make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. All pupils have positive attitudes to learning and participate fully in lessons. The school successfully promotes pupils' cooperation skills; consequently pupils work well together. Because of the caring attitude that prevails, the school produces confident, articulate youngsters who express their opinions well and ask questions. They develop good basic skills which will serve them well for the future. The majority of pupils are successful in passing the entrance exams for their next school.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are mostly given time to discuss their feelings and opinions. The use of the school grounds, links with the locality, visitors to the school and excursions further afield nurture pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world about them. From an early age, they display an enthusiasm for learning and regularly express excitement and enthusiasm in what they do. Pupils are taught to respect the adults in school and each other. All children are learning how to work alongside others harmoniously and to develop tolerance and understanding. With a Christian perspective, the school is welcoming to families from all backgrounds and actively seeks to promote inclusion in every aspect of school life. By understanding more about the uniqueness of each child in its care, pupils learn to support their peer group through any challenges they may face and thus become a supportive school community. Pupils often have time to reflect within their lessons and also in their school assemblies.

Expectations, including those for pupils' behaviour, are made clear and pupils understand these. They respect the orderly school environment and its resources. Behaviour is well managed throughout the school, including in Reception. Therefore behaviour is never less than good, with pupils displaying kindness and consideration to each other, particularly as they work in lessons in pairs or support each other whilst at play. They are aware of keeping themselves and others safe as they move about the school sensibly. The school provides a good quality school meal each day and fruit is always available to ensure that pupils are healthy. They understand the importance of looking after their bodies and the contribution that physical exercise makes to this. The pupils have many opportunities to be physically active in a wide range of ways. Games and swimming are very popular with the pupils and they leave the school as confident swimmers and keen followers of sports. Attendance is excellent and reflects the pupils' pleasure in being at school.

## Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. The school has much improved its facilities for pupils who are ill since the last inspection. Staff supervise pupils well. From an early age, pupils are taught to be aware of potential hazards and how to be safe when working and playing together. There is a comprehensive range of policies to promote pupils' well-being supported by good practice in all respects. Staff thoroughly assess risks around the school building and prior to outings to avoid any potential hazards.

Safeguarding procedures are robust. The school now meets all the regulations in this respect. A single central staff register has been implemented and training in safeguarding pupils has been undertaken by the Headteacher and staff in line with the latest statutory requirements. The school has appropriate recruitment procedures in place to ensure that all staff have undergone the necessary checks before commencing work at the school. All staff and proprietors have had the required enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau.

The school takes steps to ensure that pupils' medical and dietary needs are met. The school is fully inclusive and meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. It plans well for pupils with a variety of needs. Links with other professionals, as and when there is a need, are highly effective. Pupils with particular needs appear to be making the same good levels of progress as other pupils because staff ensure that they understand how best to assist these pupils in their learning.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Quality and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, with some excellent features. Children settle quickly in school due to the strong relationships formed with pre-school groups close-by. This helps to ensure they feel safe and happy. Children are helped to learn and develop well by being provided with a wide variety of learning experiences which encourage good progress in all areas of their learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum successfully incorporates all six areas of learning with additional high quality specialist teaching in French, music, games and swimming. Pupils are able to choose their own activities, which they do sensibly. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and reading skills. They are taught to form letters correctly and this provides them with a firm basis to further develop their handwriting skills. Children demonstrate that they have a good understanding of counting and number, but there is not yet enough emphasis on developing their problem solving skills.

Staff know the children well and have formed strong relationships with them. The activities are evaluated regularly and each child's progress is assessed. This helps to ensure that the needs of most pupils are fully met, including those with learning difficulties. Children achieve well due to good teaching and a well organised learning

environment with exceptionally good quality resources. This ensures there is a balance of purposeful learning activities, although the school recognises that, as yet, there are insufficient planned opportunities for learning outside.

The personal development and well-being of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children behave very well and form strong friendships. They cooperate and work well together, developing good social skills. Children communicate well and listen carefully to other children in their groups. The quality of welfare, health and safety of the children is good.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are effective. The well organised systems ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the Reception classes. Provision is very carefully monitored and evaluated, resulting in an accurate self-evaluation and an analysis of strengths and areas for further development.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005. It also meets all of the learning, development and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve or introduce curriculum documents for foundation subjects, information and communication technology and personal, social and health education, with clear objectives for each year group
- consider assessing pupils more widely against the national norms by further developing systems for monitoring and moderating pupils' work and, through marking, giving pupils clearer instructions about how to improve and pointers to aim for
- ensure that the potential of every pupil is realised in every lesson by developing pupils' independent learning and thinking skills and planning more effectively for these.

## EYFS

- Develop further opportunities for learning out of doors and skills in children's problem solving, reasoning and numeracy.

## Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		X		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		X		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		X		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		X		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		X		
The behaviour of pupils		X		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		X		
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### The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		X		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		X		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		X		
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		X		
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		X		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		X		



## School details

Name of school	Twycross House Pre-Preparatory School		
DCSF number	855/6014		
Unique reference number	120336		
Type of school	Pre-Preparatory		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1982		
Age range of pupils	4–8		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 81	Girls: 67	Total: 148
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 6,300		
Address of school	The Hollies The Green Twycross Atherstone Warwickshire CV9 3PQ		
Telephone number	01827 880725		
Fax number	01827 880725		
Email address	twycrosspreprep.school@virgin.net		
Headteacher	Mrs R T Assinder		
Proprietor	Mr and Mrs Assinder		
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI		
Dates of inspection	2 October 2008		