

Stoneygate College

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	856/6003
Unique Reference Number	120329
Inspection number	332467
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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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, the purpose of which is 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 College is a non-denominational independent day school for boys and girls aged from three to 11 years. It is privately owned and is located in the south of the city of Leicester. The school is not selective.

The school aims to *'contribute significantly to each child's academic and personal development, motivating them to become independent learners by providing a broad and lively curriculum and offering a range of extra-curricular activities'*.

The school is registered for 150 pupils and there are currently 110 full-time pupils and three part-time pupils on roll. Twenty two pupils are funded through the government scheme for nursery education. The school opened in 1886 and this is the first published inspection report of the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, by Ofsted. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision was inspected by Ofsted in May 2008.

Evaluation of the school

Stoneygate College provides a good standard of education for pupils throughout the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress and achieve high standards, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils' behaviour and their personal development are exemplary. The school has made significant improvement recently and meets virtually all of the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good throughout the school. It meets the needs of the pupils well and supports high academic standards. It is enriched by visits and a range of after-school clubs including chemistry, chess and a range of sports. These support the pupils' educational and personal development well. Currently most subjects are taught separately and the school has procedures to ensure that pupils build on their skills effectively. Senior leaders are in the early stages of formulating a curriculum that links learning under a theme or topic, with visits, to support learning. Further connections are being made through the satisfactory use of information and communication technology (ICT), although this is not fully embedded to support learning and research across the curriculum. The strong focus on sport, including

competitive games, supports boys' development well. Under current timetabling arrangements, the quality of games provision for girls is less effective. Girls' games lessons, for most of the year, are too long, facilities are restrictive and the development of skills is slower. A strong personal, social and health education programme enables pupils to develop a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles. The broad ethnic mix of the school community and the teaching of French contribute strongly to pupils' cultural development and understanding of global communities. Good use is made of the limited grounds, although the lack of outdoor space places limitations on pupils' learning, particularly for the youngest children.

Teaching and assessment are good throughout the school. Pupils make good progress and attain high standards. They benefit from the individual attention they receive in the small teaching groups and respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are good and frequently outstanding, especially for the older pupils. They are keen to succeed and are willing to 'go the extra mile'. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers mostly use assessment well to plan lessons which interest the pupils and challenge their thinking. On a few occasions, activities are not matched closely enough to the individual abilities of some of the most able pupils or those who find learning more difficult. As a result, these pupils do not always make as much progress as they could. Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. In the most effective lessons, these questions are carefully targeted at individual pupils. Occasionally teachers provide too much guidance for pupils. This is particularly the case in science, where some pupils spend too much time working on prescriptive worksheets. Consequently, these pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. On occasions learning opportunities are restricted by limited resources. This is particularly the case with book resources, ICT and physical education (PE).

Teachers' marking provides pupils with a clear understanding about how well they have completed their work. It frequently includes scores or comments about how well a pupil has met the learning objective. However, pupils rarely receive clear guidance about how to improve their work. The exception is in English, where marking of the oldest pupils' work is very detailed. It is evaluative and comments include appropriate targets for development. As a result, these pupils make very good progress. Some good practice in the use of targets to help pupils improve their work was also seen in Year 3. However, this good practice is not consistent throughout the school.

The school has a structured framework in place to assess pupils' learning. Effective use is made of standardised and national tests which enables the school to compare the progress that pupils make with other pupils nationally. These data are supplemented with assessments made by teachers and provide helpful information for both the school and parents. The school is currently developing a system to track the progress of individual pupils over time. Robust assessment procedures, based on

observations of children's work and linked to national guidelines, are in place for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have developed an excellent set of values and understand the distinction between right and wrong. Their social development, borne from an excellent range of opportunities for working together, is outstanding. The thriving school council has been instrumental in influencing improvements to the school and has contributed strongly to fund-raising for a range of charities. A strong sense of racial harmony pervades the school and pupils have an excellent understanding of different ethnicities and cultures. Although pupils' personal development and well-being are good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and outstanding overall, there is only limited enhancement of the spiritual aspect through assemblies and the appreciation of music and art. Pupils enjoy school immensely and their behaviour is outstanding in and beyond the classroom. Pupils and parents are rightly proud of the school and its achievements. Adults present very good role models, enabling pupils to flourish within a caring community. Pupils attend regularly and are keen participants in the broad range of opportunities that the school offers, particularly in sport.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory and in the Early Years Foundation Stage it is good. The school takes good care of its pupils on a day-to-day basis and has prepared risk assessments for activities on and away from the school site. However, these risk assessments are not always sufficiently detailed to ensure that all risks have been fully considered. The school has made significant recent improvements to its health and safety procedures. Appropriate checks are carried out for testing electrical equipment and for fire safety. Procedures for child protection are robust and staff have been suitably trained. The school has an adequate number of trained first aid staff and has plans in place to increase this number further. In addition, most members of staff have undertaken basic first aid training.

Pupils are clearly happy and say that they feel safe in school. They speak highly of the way that they look after each other and they report no bullying. They have a good understanding about leading healthy lifestyles and participate enthusiastically in the good range of physical activities provided. The school provides healthy snacks and lunches for pupils, catering well for their wide-ranging dietary needs.

The school has not prepared a suitable accessibility plan for disabled pupils and, therefore, does not fully comply with its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has identified that, in the past, its procedures relating to the checks it made on prospective employees and volunteers regarding their identity, qualifications, medical fitness and suitability to work with children have not been carried out sufficiently rigorously. As a result, several members of staff began working at the school without the required Criminal Records Bureau checks regarding suitability to work with children being carried out. The school has taken urgent remedial action to ensure that appropriate procedures to allow these staff to continue to work with children are in place while these checks are being completed.

School's premises and accommodation

The school buildings provide adequate teaching space for the pupils. However, although there are sufficient toilets and wash basins in order to fulfil the regulations for the number of pupils on roll, they are barely adequate. Some of these facilities are poorly located for the older pupils and are in a poor state of repair. Otherwise, the interior of the school is generally in good decorative order and teaching rooms benefit from a good amount of natural light. There is adequate outdoor space for breaktimes and some PE activities. The school makes very good use of additional facilities for PE at nearby rugby and cricket clubs. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 also benefit from swimming lessons in a local pool. There is no dedicated outdoor area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although teachers make the best use of the available outdoor space, this limits opportunities to support all areas of the curriculum fully for the youngest children.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides suitable opportunities to consult with parents twice a year. Parents of pupils in Year 6 benefit from an additional meeting. Parents are provided with clear and detailed information about their children's attainment and progress through two written reports and four grade cards each year. The school has recently updated its prospectus and it now fulfils all of the requirements.

Procedures for handling complaints

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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Children make good progress because learning is enjoyable. They start Year 1 with standards that are above those found nationally for all areas of learning. This is because the quality of both leadership and teaching are good. Furthermore, staff keep a close eye on children's progress and plan future learning carefully. This is particularly evident in children's good progress in the acquisition of basic reading, writing and mathematical skills. Limited access to computers and programmable toys has resulted in only satisfactory progress in ICT. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together to engage the children in a range of activities both indoors and outside. There is a shared sense of commitment to ongoing improvement. For example, although learning facilities have improved in recent months, staff are aware of the shortcomings in the outdoor accommodation and the limitations imposed by the restricted nature of the Reception classroom. Staff go out of their way to develop excellent relationships with the children and their families. Consequently, children feel confident and safe. This close liaison between home and school, combined with the sharing of information about progress, encourages parents to participate fully in their children's learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- ensure that classroom resources are of an adequate quality, quantity and range to support learning across all areas of the curriculum (paragraph 1(3)(f)).

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 an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check has been made by the proprietor (paragraph 4(2)(b)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 as amended, the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- promotion of greater equality between boys and girls for opportunities in PE
- improvement of the provision for pupils to use ICT to support learning across the curriculum
- improvement of the facilities for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

School details

Name of school	Stoneygate College		
DCSF number	856/6003		
Unique reference number	120329		
Type of school	Junior School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1886		
Age range of pupils	3–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 76	Girls: 34	Total: 110
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 2	Total: 3
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,315		
Address of school	2 Albert Road		
	Stoneygate		
	Leicester		
	Leicestershire		
	LE2 2AA		
Telephone number	01162 707414		
Fax number	01162 707414		
Email address	cooper@stoneygatecollege.co.uk		
Headteacher	Dr S Cooper		
Proprietor	Mr S Chamberlain		
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI		
Dates of inspection	17–18 March 2009		