

# The Shrubbery School

Walmley Ash Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B76 1HY

## Inspection dates

13–15 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Not enough has been done by leaders since the last inspection to maintain the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders have focused too heavily on the importance of the standards pupils reach at the end of key stage 2 rather than the progress made by individual pupils each year.
- While the percentage of pupils attaining higher standards by the time they leave the school compares well with national figures, not enough pupils are making the progress they should to achieve their full potential.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across classes and year groups. Consequently, pupils do not make consistently strong progress in all subjects.
- Leaders recognise that their school improvement planning system is not robust enough to enable them to monitor the impact of the steps taken to improve provision.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning does not focus sufficiently on the progress made by pupils in the short term and over time.
- Work for pupils is not always challenging enough, particularly for more-able pupils, resulting in some pupils not achieving the higher standards of which they are capable.
- The leadership has not yet ensured that all the independent school standards are met and not all the policies required by these standards are in place.

### The school has the following strengths

- Provision in early years has been strengthened this year. The early years leader ensures that teaching in this stage captures children's interest and helps them to make good progress.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is good. They show respect for others and talk articulately about their learning.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They value their education and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. It is enhanced by a wide range of experiences.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of concepts such as democracy and the law and are well prepared for life in modern Britain
- The importance of healthy lifestyles is regarded as a priority. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and management of the school, including governance by:
  - developing an effective system that enables leaders to be held to account for pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
  - developing a rigorous system of school evaluation and improvement planning which clearly identifies key priorities and links them to outcomes for pupils
  - ensuring that improvement plans make it clear how the impact of actions designed to bring about improvements will be monitored and evaluated, ensuring that leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning focuses sufficiently on the progress made by pupils
  - making sure all policies that are required by the independent school standards are in place.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - activities are matched to the individual needs of pupils, particularly for the most able
  - pupils' understanding of their learning is checked regularly so that provision can be adapted to meet the needs of pupils and their knowledge and understanding can be strengthened
  - the training and professional development provided to teachers is carefully focused on those areas which are key to improving pupils' progress.

### The school must meet the following independent school standards

- Paragraph 3 – The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school:
  - enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught; (paragraph 3(a))
  - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time; (paragraph 3(c))
  - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons; (paragraph 3(d))
  - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3(g)).
- Paragraph 16 – The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
  - the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up, and effective implementation of, a written risk assessment policy (paragraph 16; 16(a)).
- Paragraph 34(1) – The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:

- demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; (paragraph 34(1)(a))
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(b)).

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met as they have not secured consistently good teaching or consistently strong outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders have not established an effective self-evaluation system that enables them to monitor how well the school is performing. Consequently, although improvement priorities have been identified, leaders are not able to evaluate the impact of actions taken on improving academic outcomes for pupils.
- The current system of improvement planning does not enable leaders to hold each other robustly to account, or hold teachers to account for the progress that their pupils make.
- The school's system of improving the quality of teaching is not effective as it does not accurately identify the aspects of teaching that need to be improved in order for it to be consistently good. Records of monitoring of teaching and learning carried out by leaders are weak and do not focus on the impact of teaching on learning and the progress made by pupils in the short term and over time.
- Leaders have not established an effective system of appraisal or performance management. This has been identified by the school as an area for development. Currently training opportunities for teachers are identified through informal discussions with teachers. Although teachers received training on improving pedagogy to support the delivery of the school's new creative curriculum, leaders have not carried out monitoring in order to evaluate the impact of this training on teachers' practice.
- The school's assessment system shows that while the majority of pupils are making adequate progress, this progress is not rapid enough to ensure that enough pupils, including the most able, achieve the standards they are capable of reaching quickly enough.
- The broad and engaging curriculum ensures that pupils are offered a wide range of experiences. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 2 enjoyed a trip to Plantasia while older pupils talked enthusiastically about the wide range of sporting activities they are able to participate in. The inspector also observed pupils in Year 6 confidently presenting a weather forecast in Italian!
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted by the school. Pupils demonstrate respect towards people from different races, religions and cultural backgrounds to their own. They can talk confidently about different religions and diversity and recognise the importance of ensuring that everyone is treated equally. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Staff value the support they receive from leaders and the opportunities provided to them for their continuing professional development. This has been particularly successful in the early years, where staff have received valuable training in the requirements of the early years framework. This has resulted in children in Nursery and Reception developing their independence and investigative skills.

## Governance

- Governance requires improvement.

- The school does not have a governing body. The proprietor of the school, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are responsible for governance.
- Leaders have not ensured that all policies are in place. For example, although appropriate risk assessments are carried out, there is no risk assessment policy. This is a requirement of the independent school standards.
- The proprietor of the school visits the school regularly and is responsible for its business and financial management. He does not have sufficient knowledge of the progress made by pupils, or the quality of teaching and learning, to be able to challenge leaders about these aspects of the school's performance.
- Governance does not enable leaders to be held accountable for the performance of the school. Consequently, improvements have not been timely enough to ensure strong outcomes for pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding policy is published on the website and is readily available. It meets the most recent government requirements.
- There is a culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff undertake regular child protection training, are aware of the potential risks to pupils and are clear about the processes that need to be followed if they have any concerns.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. For example, they have a good understanding of different types of bullying and know whom to speak to if they have any worries.
- The school implements its policies effectively to ensure that pupils are safeguarded, for example, policies relating to anti-bullying, behaviour management and safer recruitment.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- Teaching is not consistently strong across all classes and all year groups. Consequently, pupils do not make consistently good progress in all year groups.
- The level of challenge provided for middle-ability and the most able learners is too low. This has resulted in too many pupils not making as much progress as they could in the short term and over time.
- Teaching limits pupils' learning when there are insufficient checks on how well pupils have learned during a lesson or through an activity. Teaching does not make effective use of lesson time by providing opportunities to check pupils' understanding and adapt the lesson in order to strengthen and deepen learning.
- Because learning is not always well matched to the needs of pupils, too much time is lost in lessons by pupils who either do not understand the work, or finish quickly, needing to wait for the teacher to support them or direct them to further activities.
- Some teachers rely too heavily on pupils completing worksheets. Leaders have recognised this and agree that this is limiting pupils' learning, particularly for the most able pupils. Pupils' ability to write independently for sustained periods is also being hampered by the

overuse of worksheets, resulting in pupils not making rapid enough improvements in their writing.

- Where lessons are not engaging, or pupils are required to spend longer than they need to on an activity, they become disengaged and lose motivation.
- Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to solve problems for themselves or develop their mathematical reasoning skills. This is reflected in the outcomes for pupils in mathematics.
- The school has implemented a system of assessment which allows teachers to make termly assessments on what pupils can do in English and mathematics. Pupils are also assessed when they join the school. However, leaders are not yet using this assessment system effectively to evaluate the rate of progress made by individual pupils, or by groups of pupils. Results from the most recent assessments have not been analysed by leaders. Consequently, leaders do not have a clear understanding of the progress made by pupils in English and mathematics across the school.
- Pupils respond well in lessons where they are active participants in the learning. For example, in a challenging mathematics lesson on problem-solving pupils demonstrated resilience, independence and high levels of engagement and enthusiasm. During these lessons pupils develop their core mathematical skills well.
- Teachers demonstrate how to use vocabulary well. This results in pupils developing a wide range of appropriate terminology and the ability to speak articulately and confidently.
- Inspectors observed some effective questioning used well to gauge what pupils know and can do and to check their understanding. However, this was inconsistent across the school.
- Less-able pupils are particularly well supported, both in and out of lessons. This results in these pupils making strong progress in their learning over time.
- The school engages well with parents, and they value the information they are given about their children's learning and progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic when learning is enjoyable and pitched at the right level. They are able to discuss their ideas and opinions articulately.
- Pupils recognise the value of education. They have high aspirations for their futures and understand the role of education in helping them to achieve their ambitions.
- Pupils show respect for themselves and for others. They have a good understanding of a range of different types of bullying, including cyber and racist bullying. They say that bullying in school is rare and feel confident that if it did happen it would be quickly dealt with by teachers. This is supported by school behaviour logs.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They have taken part

in safety days which have taught them about water, road, railway and e-safety. They are taught about healthy eating and could explain the benefits of eating a healthy diet. They are encouraged to participate in a wide range of sporting activities, including golf, cricket and running.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors. They conduct themselves well throughout the school day. They are self-disciplined and understand the importance of good behaviour in lessons.
- Attendance overall is in line with national expectation. Pupils arrive at school punctually.
- Pupils say that behaviour in lessons is good. Parents have no concerns about behaviour. Behaviour logs support this. There are very few recorded incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Those that are recorded show that inappropriate behaviour is quickly and effectively dealt with.
- Attendance for a minority of pupils is low and is not improving despite actions taken by school. This is mainly due to holidays being taken in term time by some families. School is doing everything it reasonably can to improve pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors noted a few times when pupils were not fully focused on their learning during lessons, particularly when teaching failed to engage pupils fully, or when pupils were waiting for the teacher.
- During the younger children's playtime, the inspector observed some minor incidents involving collisions between pupils. This was because of the lack of activities available for pupils, which meant that the majority of pupils were running across the playground.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Leaders have high expectations for the academic attainment of pupils and historically pupils achieve well at the end of key stage 2 when compared with pupils nationally. However, school assessment information shows that pupils enter the school working at levels at least similar to those expected for their age. This means that over time the majority of pupils make expected progress, with only a small number of pupils making progress that is better than this.
- The school's own assessment information shows that currently the majority of pupils are making expected progress in English and mathematics, with too few pupils making strong progress and a minority of pupils not making the progress they are required to in order to reach the targets set for them by the school.
- Leaders do not currently measure the progress of groups so could not provide the inspectors with information about the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or the most able.
- Evidence in pupils' English and mathematics books shows that while less-able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make accelerated progress because they are well supported in lessons, the most able pupils do not make consistently strong progress as they are not sufficiently challenged.

- Pupils read widely and often. They enjoy reading and read well, with good understanding, fluency and expression. Phonics is well taught and the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1 exceeds the national figure.
- Pupils attain well by the end of key stage 2 and are consequently well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Provision for children in Nursery is strong. Provision in Reception has improved this year due to the sharing of good practice in Nursery across Reception and a greater understanding amongst leaders and Reception teachers of the requirements of the early years curriculum. The majority of children achieved a good level of development by the end of Reception this year, which is an improvement on previous results. Children leaving Reception are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leadership and management of the early years is good. This has resulted in effective improvements being made to provision for children. Leaders have an accurate knowledge of improvements that still need to be made and have a robust plan in place to ensure that these are achieved. These plans include ensuring that all early years staff understand the ethos of this stage and developing the outdoor area so that more of the children's learning can be conducted outside.
- Teaching across Nursery and Reception is strong. Teachers in the early years now plan more frequently from children's interests and include more open-ended, investigative activities. This has resulted in children demonstrating greater levels of enjoyment, engagement, motivation and independence in their learning.
- Safeguarding in early years is effective. There are no breaches in statutory requirements. Children's personal development and welfare are good.
- Behaviour is good. Children have a secure understanding of how they should behave and why this is important. They conduct themselves well and show respect for others.
- Engagement with outside agencies, including specialist early years advisors, is effective and has contributed to improvements in provision for children in Nursery and Reception.
- The environment is stimulating, language-rich and supports the development of children's skills. For example, speaking and listening and role play are encouraged by the setting-up of role-play areas such as a 'dentist surgery' and a 'travel agents'.
- Staff carry out detailed assessments of children on entry to the setting and at the end of Nursery and Reception. These assessments cover the wider early years curriculum. However, leaders have identified that the children's learning records currently do not provide enough examples of what children can do. They are looking at how a wider range of evidence can be collected and shared with parents.

## School details

Unique reference number	103578
DfE registration number	330/6064
Inspection number	10020746

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Eric Allen & The Estate of the late Paul Terry
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Hilary Atkins
Annual fees (day pupils)	Nursery £1,219–2,099 Infants (Rec, Y1, Y2) £2,425 Juniors (Y3–6) £2,688
Telephone number	0121 351 1582
Website	<a href="http://www.shrubberyschool.co.uk">www.shrubberyschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@shrubbery.bham.sch.uk">info@shrubbery.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6–7 March 2012

## Information about this school

- Shrubbery Independent School is on a single site in Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham. It is registered with the Department for Education (DfE) to provide full-time education for up to 280 boys and girls from ages 3 to 11.
- The school was previously inspected in March 2012. This inspection was carried out by two inspectors over three days.
- The school has been operating since 1930 and is the oldest co-educational independent school in Sutton Coldfield.

- The school aims to 'provide a happy and caring environment in which all children are encouraged to reach their full potential'.
- The school does not use any other site or provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across all year groups and looked at a range of pupils' work in English, mathematics and topic work. Most of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at the school's assessment information for individual pupils and year groups.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the proprietor, senior leader and the early years leader. The lead inspector also spoke with a group of pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6.
- An inspector listened to pupils read from Years 2 and 3 and observed how children are taught phonics.
- Questionnaires submitted by 20 members of staff were scrutinised.
- A wide range of documents and policies were looked at, including health and safety checks, records of observations of teaching, safeguarding documentation and records of attendance.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents by speaking to parents at the school gate, analysing the 38 responses to the Parent View questionnaire and looking at the responses to the school's own survey of parents' views.
- A check of the premises and the facilities provided for pupils was also carried out.

## Inspection team

Janet Satchwell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

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