

Staleydene Preparatory School

Dukinfield Methodist Church, Wellington Parade, Dukinfield, Cheshire SK16 4LE

Inspection dates

8–10 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has created a friendly and secure learning environment that encourages pupils to progress well.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start. School leaders ensure they settle well and make good progress.
- Pupils are well behaved and experience a good range of opportunities that promote good personal development.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They feel the school is well led and that their children make strong progress.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know that there is always an adult on hand if they need to share a concern.
- The quality of marking and feedback in pupils' books is inconsistent; pupils are sometimes not sure how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to produce independent work that gives them a chance to apply the knowledge they have acquired.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop pupils' knowledge of how to improve their work by more consistent use of the school's marking and feedback policy.
- Improve the progress of pupils further by:
 - providing more opportunities across the curriculum to apply the knowledge and understanding they have acquired in English and mathematics
 - planning and setting more independent work to provide opportunities to develop their skills, especially in writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school of a secure, friendly environment where pupils are challenged to achieve well. This is expressed in the school's ethos and values and reflected in the good outcomes for pupils.
- The headteacher has a good grasp of the strengths and development areas of the school. She has identified these in a clear improvement plan. This plan demonstrates ambition for pupils' progress and recognises that some processes, such as assessment, need to be more focused.
- All the independent school standards and the statutory requirements of the early years are met.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well served by the range of subjects and by other activities, such as raising funds for charity or attending events organised by members of the Methodist Church, in whose building the school is based.
- Parents are highly satisfied with all aspects of the school. They say that their children are making good progress and they appreciate the supportive and welcoming atmosphere. In conversation with the inspector, one parent described the school as a 'close-knit family'.
- The school promotes fundamental British values well. For example, classroom displays show that pupils understand the theme of Remembrance and that they must reject racism. Their work in religious education gives them opportunities to explore a variety of faiths and develop a deeper understanding of them.
- The headteacher has a system in place to record and track pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science. The system is effective in identifying the knowledge, skills and understanding each pupil has acquired in these subjects, but does not clearly and consistently indicate the standard they have achieved at the end of the year. Plans are in place to address this.

Governance

- The proprietor of the school is the headteacher. The school does not have a governing body in place.
- The headteacher and teachers frequently evaluate the effectiveness of their provision and are committed to improving the school further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record is compliant and vetting checks on staff are thorough.
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy is current and in line with the most recent government guidance. Safeguarding training is regular and appropriate reporting procedures are in place. There have been no safeguarding incidents since the previous inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and plan lessons that develop pupils' knowledge and understanding well. They have high expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour.
- Pupils show a good level of interest in lessons and are enthusiastic about their work. They regularly demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning.
- Teachers question their pupils well in order to probe their thinking and to encourage them to improve their work.
- Pupils use their reading skills effectively. Most show that they can read fluently and with good comprehension. Some pupils show that they are reading at a high standard, with texts that contain complex sentence structures and challenging vocabulary for the age of the pupil.
- Teachers set regular homework, which is appropriately challenging and contributes well to pupils' progress.
- The school has a clear policy to guide teachers on how to mark pupils' work and give feedback. It is not consistently applied. This means that sometimes pupils do not know how to improve their work.
- Teachers provide work that challenges all pupils, including the most able. Occasionally, however, teachers do not intervene as quickly as they should when the task proves to be too hard.
- Pupils' work in other subjects shows that they have opportunities to write but fewer opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge. They also lack chances to develop their writing skills through, for example, creating a greater number of independent written pieces of their own.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show very caring attitudes towards each other. For example, when one child is coughing while eating lunch, another gently pats her on the back to check she is not in distress.
- Pupils say that they like school because they enjoy their learning and they get on well with each other. They recognise that sometimes they fall out, but they quickly make friends again.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Adults look after them well and pupils know who to speak to if they have any worries.
- School leaders provide good opportunities for pupils to develop socially and morally within the church community in which the school is based. The pupils attend many events organised by the church, such as Easter services, and they take part in charitable activities, such as collecting for a food bank. They also have the chance to develop a

sense of responsibility when they are invited to look after the 'tots' at 'mums and tots' events.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and their attendance is high. Pupils get on well with each other and show good conduct around the school, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- They show good behaviour in class and this contributes well to their progress. They are polite and courteous to adults.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. The most able pupils are suitably challenged and are showing skills in, for example, reading that are above those expected for their age.
- Some children show good articulacy and speak fluently using a good range of vocabulary. One child in the younger pupils' class, for example, uses sentences such as, 'I did super reading last night.'
- In the younger pupils' class, pupils make use of the reading and writing skills they acquire to produce written pieces that show ability that is typical for their age and stage of development or better. One pupil used his phonic knowledge to write phrases such as 'on his back' correctly, so as to extend a sentence he had begun.
- Leaders have been successful in preparing pupils in previous year groups for entrance examinations to independent grammar schools. They have received reports that these pupils are now progressing well in those schools.
- Pupils' work is well presented and their handwriting is appropriately neat and legible according to their age.
- In the older pupils' class, pupils acquire a good degree of knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects. English books show clear examples of aspects of grammar and punctuation that pupils mainly learn successfully, but there are few opportunities to apply those skills to, for instance, an independently written story or report.
- There are some inconsistencies in the application of the school's marking and feedback policy. One effect of this is that pupils use more advanced punctuation inconsistently, as errors are not regularly challenged.

Early years provision

Good

- The headteacher leads early years provision effectively. She has a clear vision which entails balancing children's experiences between opportunities to learn through play and more directed learning approaches that embed the basic skills required for Year 1 and beyond.
- Safeguarding is effective and welfare requirements are met. The early years teacher is the headteacher and designated safeguarding lead and is well informed about requirements and procedures. Children show they feel safe by their good behaviour and

their positive attitudes to their work and to the adults in charge of them.

- Children begin their time in the early years with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. Leaders plan effective activities across all areas of learning and children show good progress from their starting points. For example, they show good physical development, as they have an appropriate pencil grip and show generally good letter formation. They show good imagination as they play with small world animals.
- Teaching in the early years is good. As a result, children demonstrate strong reading skills and are already reading complete sentences from their books with good fluency and expression for their age. They use their knowledge of phonics to read unfamiliar words correctly.
- Children acquire mathematical knowledge and understanding well. They can, for instance, recognise 'o'clock' and 'half past' on an analogue clock. They also progress from tasks that require them to follow numbers in order from 0 to 10 to calculations such as 7 subtract 3. The development of problem-solving and reasoning skills, however, is less strong, with few opportunities for children to apply their knowledge and understanding.
- The teacher provides a high level of challenge for all children, including the most able. In mathematics, for example, children add two single-digit numbers, going beyond merely knowing what 'one more' is. Staff can be slow to intervene to change the activity when a task is too difficult. This results in a slowing of the learning.

School details

Unique reference number	133564
DfE registration number	357/6055
Inspection number	10020723

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	7
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Miss Kirsty Best
Chair	None
Headteacher	Miss Kirsty Best
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3900
Telephone number	07904 693660
Website	None
Email address	staleydeneprep@yahoo.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–7 November 2013

Information about this school

- Staleydene Preparatory School is a non-selective day school, registered for up to 46 boys and girls aged from three to 11 years. It opened in 2002 and moved to its current premises at Dukinfield Methodist Church, Tameside, in January 2012.
- The school uses a large classroom for the early years and Year 1 and a small classroom for Year 2 and Year 5. The church hall is used for school assemblies and physical education. An adjacent grassed area is used for outdoor learning and play.
- Currently, there are seven pupils on the roll, including one part-time pupil. Three (including the part-time child) are in early years, three are in key stage 1 and one is in

key stage 2. None of the pupils has a statement of special educational needs. None of the pupils is disadvantaged.

- The school has no particular religious affiliation, although it has close links with the Methodist church in which it is based. It aims to provide a friendly, family atmosphere in which pupils can learn effectively, develop strong foundations in basic skills and attain high academic standards.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with a day's notice.
- The inspector observed four lessons taught by the headteacher and the class teacher. The inspector looked at pupils' work and held meetings with the headteacher, the class teacher and pupils. The inspector also met with a group of parents that contained at least one parent of every child in the school.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of pupils' progress and assessment records. He checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed by the sole parent who responded to Parent View (the online survey). There were no other survey responses.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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