

Excelsior College

Selby Centre, Selby Road, Tottenham, London N17 8JN

Inspection dates

16–18 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have not ensured a good standard of education since the previous inspection.
- Planned improvements have had insufficient time to become established routines in the school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable. As a result, pupils do not make strong progress.
- Leaders are not held to account for the progress pupils make.
- The primary curriculum does not ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Activities do not provide enough challenge for pupils, particularly the most able. Consequently, pupils make inadequate progress over time.
- Assessment systems lack rigour in tracking the progress of pupils. Consequently, progress is uneven.
- Too many pupils arrive late to school.

The school has the following strengths

- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded through all areas of the school's work.
- The school has excellent relationships with parents. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, especially the ethos and the culture.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are polite, courteous and respectful. They are proud of their school. They conduct themselves well in lessons.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school does not meet the requirements of the Schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - systems are sufficiently robust and rigorously monitored
 - the curriculum enables pupils to do well in all subjects
 - the advisory board holds the headteacher to account for securing good progress for all pupils.
- Improve teaching and outcomes by making sure that:
 - all teachers have good subject knowledge and have high expectations for their pupils
 - teachers set tasks which challenge learners
 - time is used productively in lessons.
- Teachers routinely keep a check on pupils' work in order to prompt and guide pupils to do well. Reduce the number of pupils who are late for school.
- The school must meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured a good standard of education since the last inspection. They do not have an accurate view of the effectiveness of the school. Achievement is variable across subjects and year groups. This is because the quality of teaching is not strong enough and varies from lesson to lesson.
- Priorities for improvement do not sufficiently relate to the independent school standards and the evaluation schedule used by inspectors.
- There is still some way to go to ensure that all teaching is effective. The recent recruitment of a full-time teacher should enable the headteacher to have a more positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes.
- The headteacher seeks to ensure that the curriculum supports the school ethos, which is based on the school values, such as 'self-belief, inclusion and resilience'. There is a curriculum map for Years 1 to 6. This includes all subjects in the national curriculum. Plans include the use of the local environment, especially in geography, with visits to the Lea Valley and Alexandra Palace.
- Leaders have developed plans for each subject. However, they are not fit for purpose. They do not clearly outline the teaching of key skills. For example, in English, there is no clear progression in the teaching of spelling, and no mention of phonics teaching or handwriting. Although the school states that spelling is tested weekly, this is not reflected in pupils' work. In mathematics, expectations are too low. For example, there is no emphasis on the learning of multiplication tables at any specific moment. In science, plans do not emphasise key scientific vocabulary.
- Curriculum plans promote British values in line with the school's ethos.
- Pupils study a wide range of subjects, which cover the independent school standards. However, although the school's policy states that there are a 'wide range of enrichment activities to supplement the curriculum', these are not in evidence. There is no provision for extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning experiences.
- Provision for physical education is limited because of the lack of space.
- All parents and pupils who gave their views to the inspector had an entirely positive view of the school.
- Although the school's prospectus states that 'punctuality is essential to avoid disruption and comply with the code of conduct', too many pupils are late for lessons.

Governance

- The school has recently established an advisory board. This board does not yet provide adequate challenge to leadership to ensure that the right actions are in place to improve pupils' outcomes and meet all the independent school standards. Consequently, the advisory board has not ensured that the school meets its statutory requirements.

- The school's action plan was developed before the advisory board was established. They have not ensured that the plan is implemented. As a result, the quality of the curriculum and of teaching, learning and assessment remain poor.
- Members of the advisory board are enthusiastic. They support the work of the school but are not incisive in their understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Evidence from the inspection shows that little attention has been given to ensuring that school priorities will lead to necessary improvements.
- The advisory board is committed to securing improvement. They have expertise, which would benefit the school, but have yet to utilise them to help on all aspects of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Those standards that were not met in the last inspection and monitoring visit have not been fully addressed. For example, the school does not undertake risk assessments before pupils go on educational visits.
- Improvements have been made, for example improving safety in the car park, and in increasing security for the school. However, there is a lack of vigilance in ensuring that pupils are safe. The single central record did not meet statutory requirements. Many actions recorded are not dated and/or checked.
- The school has no website. The only available versions of statutory policies were hard copies in the school's policy file. They now meet statutory requirements.
- Although staff say that they have read the latest version of 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2018), there is no record of this. The headteacher is the designated safeguarding officer but has yet to undertake training around the 'Prevent' duty. Consequently, there are no well-developed strategies in place to keep children and learners safe.
- All pupils spoken to during the inspection feel safe. However, their understanding of safety is limited. It is based on 'being mindful of who they talk to' and 'being careful in the car park'. The headteacher asserts that pupils discuss issues relating to combatting extremism and radicalisation, but not female genital mutilation. This does not support pupils in developing their own understanding of these risks, and in learning how to keep themselves and others safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate because expectations are too low. Weak assessment practice and inconsistent planning do not meet pupils' needs. Although improvements have been made in planning and the use of assessment, neither are sufficiently embedded to ensure that teaching is effective. Assessments made at the end of the school year are not used to inform the next stages in learning.
- Teachers work hard to improve the school's assessment system, and they plan to meet the needs of all learners. This includes the use of 'I can' statements for each child. However, the quality of teachers' assessment and of their ongoing feedback is inconsistent. For example, the school is insufficiently aware of national expectations for

each year group or age-related curricular goals.

- Although individual targets in English and mathematics have recently been introduced, pupils have yet to use them. Not all pupils can read them, and many do not fully understand what they mean. For example, pupils could not explain the meaning of a 'varied sentence opener' or a 'subordinate clause'.
- Teachers implement strategies to support learning. For example, teachers explain the purpose of a lesson through the use of learning objectives. However, pupils copy the objective from the board, but are unclear about its meaning. Consequently, progress is limited.
- Spellings and number reversals are not challenged by teachers. Consequently, pupils' development in writing and simple calculation is delayed.
- Leaders have started to explore ways to measure pupils' different starting points in mathematics, but these are not robust. It is still unclear how the curriculum, teachers' planning and assessments of pupils' learning combine to ensure pupils' progress.
- Teaching does not always challenge pupils to make good progress. Low-level activities do not enable them to improve their knowledge and understanding. For example, a science activity for all pupils taught them how to describe different types of teeth in the human mouth. However, labelling of these teeth on a worksheet did not extend their scientific knowledge. This demonstrates low expectations, where work does not challenge pupils' capabilities, especially for older pupils.
- Planned activities do not support progress. Too much teaching in mathematics is based around calculation. The school's resources are not used to help pupils learn how to solve simple fraction problems. Activities do not challenge thinking, encourage independence or extend understanding. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities to enable pupils to develop their problem-solving skills or apply what has been learned in new contexts.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. This is because, despite pupils' positive attitudes to learning, there is no impact on the progress they make.
- While the school's prospectus states that its reputation is built on high standards of self-discipline, pupils take insufficient pride in their work and their presentation is poor. This is because teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- Pupils listen attentively to each other. They demonstrate independent learning skills, such as research for a presentation to others. They read aloud willingly and contribute to discussions. Pupils are keen to answer questions.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and each other. However, too many pupils are late for school and, consequently, not prepared for lessons.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the curriculum. Teachers foster the values of respect and tolerance, particularly during assemblies. The school actively promotes democracy. Pupils are encouraged to express

their own views, and to vote for activities in which they wish to participate. While this enables pupils to enjoy their learning, it does not strengthen their outcomes or link into recently developed curriculum plans.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils and parents say that there is no bullying in the school. Opportunities are provided for them to reflect so that they become more aware of how to conduct themselves.
- During the inspection, playground behaviour was good. Pupils were keen to talk to the inspector. They played well together with the limited range of equipment available to them.
- Pupils are considerate and caring. They are respectful of each other and mix well together. All pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the building is good.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Assessment information available and seen in a sample of pupils' books shows that pupils do not make strong progress from their individual starting points.
- Work seen in books reflects low expectations and attainment across the school. For example, younger pupils are unable to spell accurately. Pupils are insufficiently challenged. They are not systematically expected to take key spellings home to learn.
- Pupils who were heard reading, did so with varying degrees of confidence. This is despite the school's expectation that all pupils will read fluently by the age of six. Although all pupils enjoy reading, they do not always read accurately. This is because they do not always use strategies such as sounding out to pronounce words correctly. Better readers read more challenging texts, which are recommended by the headteacher. Although pupils have reading records, they are used inconsistently.

School details

Unique reference number	102174
DfE registration number	309/6076
Inspection number	10068028

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
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	N/A
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Gareth Gilfillian
Chair	Miss O. Taylor
Headteacher	Gareth Gilfillian
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4440
Telephone number	020 8365 1153
Website	N/A
Email address	gilfillian2@hotmail.com
Date of previous inspection	7–9 November 2017

Information about this school

- Excelsior College was last inspected in November 2017, when it was judged to be inadequate.
- In March 2018, the school's action plan was evaluated and judged to be acceptable.
- In May 2018, a monitoring visit was commissioned. It found many standards not met.

- The headteacher is also the proprietor.
- The school has recently established an advisory board of three members.
- The school is situated within The Selby Centre, a multi-use centre serving the wider community. Pupils are taught in one classroom, in flexible groupings.
- At the time of this inspection, no children were on roll in the early years.
- No pupils have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection in October 2018 was carried out at the request of the Department for Education, the registration authority for independent schools.
- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice. The inspection took place over two days.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and other staff throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector observed learning sessions and reviewed pupils' work in books, folders and on display.
- The lead inspector met with all pupils to discuss their learning and views of the school. All pupils were heard reading.
- The lead inspector spoke informally with pupils throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with two parents during the inspection to seek their views. There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, for these to be considered.
- The lead inspector visited all areas of the school and site that are used by pupils.
- The lead inspector scrutinised documentation, policies and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding, and checked compliance with the independent school standards

Inspection team

Rick Barnes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) 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;
 - 3(d) 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;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) 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;

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and

attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].

- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable–
 - 29(1)(a) physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum; and
 - 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request;
 - 32(3)(e) particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations;

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 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–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018