

Twycross House Pre-Preparatory School

The Hollies, The Green, Twycross, Atherstone, Warwickshire CV9 3PQ

Inspection dates

3–5 July 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The quality of leadership is outstanding. The proprietors lead the school very well. They have ensured that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. This enables pupils to excel in a range of subjects.
- The proprietors have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Pupils read exceptionally well. Teachers successfully promote a love of reading. Pupils read with expression and show a deep understanding of the texts.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They ensure that work is appropriately challenging for the pupils. Pupils make strong progress through the school.
- Children in the early years make excellent progress. The children enjoy their learning and become confident writers. They use their phonics knowledge well to learn to spell new words.
- Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They are kind and considerate to each other and follow school routines closely.
- Pupils feel safe at the school. The staff are very attentive to the pupils' needs and support them well.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted very well. They develop a good understanding of the needs of others through their fundraising activities. In addition, they have many opportunities to learn about other religions and cultures that are different from their own.
- The staff work very well as a team. They support each other with new initiatives to develop pupils' learning even further. Nonetheless, opportunities for the professional development of staff have been limited.
- Pupils' imaginative writing shows great flair and pupils use ambitious vocabulary. However, their non-fiction writing is not as well developed.

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?

- Provide more opportunities to develop pupils' non-fiction writing, particularly in history and geography.
- Increase the opportunities for the continued professional development of staff to maintain and raise standards further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The proprietors have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- The proprietors, who are also the headteachers, demonstrate outstanding leadership. They are highly committed to meeting the needs of the pupils and the staff. The school is a harmonious place and pupils' outcomes are high.
- Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the school and the staff. Parents value the nurturing environment and say the children are valued and the staff understand each child's needs. All parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to others.
- The proprietors and the deputy headteacher closely monitor the work of the school. They regularly check the quality of teaching and the quality of pupils' work to ensure that standards remain high. The deputy headteacher leads moderation meetings to ensure that the staff are assessing pupils' work accurately. Leaders have a very good understanding of the quality of pupils' work.
- Staff are highly complimentary about the work of leaders. They say there is a strong ethos of teamwork and people are very willing to share their strengths to help others. Staff morale is high. All members of staff who completed the staff survey strongly agreed that they feel proud to work at the school and the school is well led and managed. However, some staff feel training opportunities are limited. There is no programme of training in place to ensure that standards are maintained and raised further.
- The curriculum is exciting. Pupils have the opportunity to learn a broad range of subjects, including music, French and swimming. Reading is promoted extremely well. Pupils enjoy reading and this supports their learning in other subjects. They take part in visits, such as to Tamworth Castle, to enhance their knowledge of history. Pupils work with older pupils from the senior school when they go pond-dipping to enhance their scientific knowledge. The school productions are performed to a high standard.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Themes in assembly promote pupils' social development by encouraging them to reflect on relationships, for example friendship. Pupils willingly took part in the shoebox appeal to support others less fortunate than themselves. They learn about Christianity and visit the local church. Their cultural development is strong. Leaders have invited parents in to celebrate their own cultures and religions with the pupils. As a result, pupils learned about the importance of Ramadan to Muslims and about traditional Welsh culture. Pupils' cultural development has also been enhanced by visits to museums. Pupils visited the Gladstone Pottery Museum and painted plates in the style of Clarice Cliff.
- British values are promoted very well. Pupils have a good understanding of different religions in Britain. They have the opportunity to visit different places of worship, including a gurdwara and a Hindu temple. They study religious festivals such as Diwali. Pupils are very tolerant of each other and work well together.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) liaises closely with external professionals to meet the needs of pupils. If pupils are at risk of underachievement, extra support is put in place. Pupils' progress is closely tracked to check that they are meeting

the target set out in their individual educational programmes. Leaders' analysis of this group shows that they make good progress.

Governance

- The proprietors know all the pupils very well. They are reflective practitioners and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school accurately. They have ensured that the pupils' attainment at the school remains high.
- The proprietors and the deputy headteacher work effectively together. They have ensured that the school continues to improve. For example, the school has improved the mathematics curriculum by ensuring that pupils are challenged by completing more reasoning and problem-solving activities. In addition, they have focused on improving pupils' mental arithmetic skills to ensure that pupils have a good mathematical knowledge. Through their leadership, the outcomes of pupils continue to be strong.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs) ensure that staff receive regular updates about safeguarding. Staff completed a questionnaire to check their understanding of the latest government guidance concerning safeguarding. The DSLs have ensured that they have kept their training up to date. As a result, they are well informed and knowledgeable about safeguarding.
- Leaders take swift action in response to a concern raised about a child. They record their actions to keep children safe. Leaders work well with external agencies to meet the needs of pupils.
- The premises are very well maintained. Appropriate risk assessments are completed for school activities and visits to minimise risks and put appropriate control measures in place. All the necessary checks for the maintenance of the building have been completed.
- Staff are very attentive to the needs of the pupils. All parents who completed Parent View strongly agreed that their child was safe at school. Pupils who spoke with the inspectors felt safe at school.
- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and takes into account the current government requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers inspire children to read. Teachers in Year 1 read a range of poems to the pupils about the seaside. Afterwards, pupils thoroughly enjoyed choosing their favourite poem about the seaside. Teachers and teaching assistants hear the pupils read regularly and successfully encourage pupils to read with expression and fluency.
- Teachers provide numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. For example, pupils were given a three-digit number and asked to rearrange the digits to make as many new numbers they could, as well as calculating the biggest and smallest number. Pupils were asked to solve challenging problems when they were learning about time. Pupils in Year 1 successfully composed a timeline of events that

related to home and school routines. In Year 3, pupils learned to calculate the duration of activities to the nearest minute. Pupils gain a deep understanding of mathematical concepts.

- Teachers inspire pupils in science. They regularly provide pupils with questions and ask pupils to investigate, for example 'Do wax crayons make fabric waterproof?' Pupils investigate their ideas and write accurate conclusions using their evidence. One pupil wrote, 'Wax can make some fabrics waterproof if enough wax crayon is used.' Pupils have a good understanding of fair testing and know to change only one variable at a time. They used this knowledge well when they designed a test to find out if the shape of a balloon affected how far a rocket travelled. Pupils make outstanding progress in science.
- Music is taught very well. Pupils learn about notation and explore instruments, such as the glockenspiel. They made their own composition within a musical structure provided by the teacher. Pupils are creative and were supported well by the teacher to develop a tuneful musical piece.
- Regular homework is set for pupils in mathematics and reading to help consolidate their learning in class.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils display excellent attitudes to their learning. Pupils focus very well on their learning and time is used efficiently in lessons to maximise all learning opportunities.
- Pupils are very thoughtful towards each other. Each half-term they have the opportunity to vote for other pupils in their class to receive a merit award for personal qualities, such as kindness. Pupils are eager to celebrate with those pupils who receive the awards.
- The pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. The youngest pupils know the importance of eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. When the temperature is hot, all pupils wear their sun hats and take their drinking bottles outside.
- Pupils and their families raise a lot of money for charity through organising fundraising events, such as cake baking. Pupils have helped to support the local foodbank and this has made pupils aware of the needs of others in society.
- Pupils say bullying does not happen very often. They say that teachers are very good at sorting out any problems they may have.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the potential dangers of the internet. Children in the Reception Year have written about how to stay safe online. Pupils recite the rhyme 'Before you tap and click, you need to stop and think, and tell someone.' Pupils know not to click on pop-ups or give out personal information on the internet.
- Children's physical development is enhanced through participating in a range of sports. Currently, pupils are participating in the daily mile around the extensive school grounds.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils follow the school rules very closely. They move around the school in an orderly manner and apply themselves to their learning in an exceptional way. Pupils follow the teachers' instructions and want to achieve well. The pupils' behaviour remains of a high standard when their work is more challenging, and pupils demonstrate great resilience in their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtime is excellent. They talk and play with their friends amicably. Pupils say that behaviour is good at school and that they enjoy school.
- Pupils' attendance is consistently high.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils excel in reading. Pupils are very fluent and use their phonics knowledge well to decode unknown words. Pupils also read with expression, reflecting a genuine love of books. Pupils' comprehension is developed very well. Pupils can infer meaning from the texts and demonstrate a deep understanding of the texts that they read. The vast majority of pupils through the school have a reading age which is well above their chronological age.
- Pupils' mathematical problem-solving skills are highly developed. Pupils are provided with challenges to make them think and to develop their skills. Scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's assessments show that pupils attain highly.
- Pupils use their imagination very well to write poetry. For example, pupils were asked to describe the colour blue. One pupil wrote, 'Blue looks like bluebells dancing around on fluffy clouds.' In other fiction pieces, pupils use descriptive language and spell most of the words accurately. One Year 2 pupil described an animal: 'He has an enormous tail that has a spike like an arrow. His pointy ears are shaped like flames.' Pupils' creative writing is of a very high standard.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils perform drama and singing productions with great enthusiasm. Pupils in Year 3 pronounce their lines with clear diction and expression, and dance and sing with great timing and flair.
- Pupils' swimming abilities are of a high standard. Pupils learn to swim with increasing technical accuracy. Pupils swim freestyle with minimal splashing of the water, showing great control of their movements.
- Pupils' artwork is developed very well through studying the work of famous artists. The delft tiles showing willow patterns in the style of William Morris are very impressive.
- Pupils' non-fiction writing is less developed than their imaginative writing. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of history and geography topics through writing. Consequently, this aspect of their writing is underdeveloped.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Most children start school with skills that are typical for their age, with a small minority starting school with skills above those found typically. Children make exceptional progress in many areas of the curriculum. By the end of the Reception Year, the majority of children are exceeding national expectations in many curriculum areas. The children are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Children learn to read using phonics and remembering tricky words that are not spelled phonetically. Children make very strong progress with their reading, and over 60% of children leave the Reception Year with reading skills that exceed those typically expected of children their age.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. Children apply their phonics skills to have a good attempt to spell words. Teachers use drama to inspire children to write. Pupils start to write imaginatively and make strong progress through the Reception Year.
- Children learn about patterns to deepen their mathematical understanding. As the year has progressed, pupils have made more complex, repeating patterns using different coloured beads or small play resources to demonstrate their improved knowledge.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced through looking at festivals in other religions. Children learn about the meaning of Diwali. Children have also written about Kenya after finding out more about the wildlife in the country. In art, children have opportunities to develop collage and printing techniques to a high standard.
- Children behave very well. They follow school routines closely. Children discuss their learning with each other and take turns appropriately. The relationships between the children and the staff are excellent.
- Teachers liaise very well with a range of external agencies, particularly health professionals, to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils make good progress because of the support that is provided for them.
- The early years is led very well. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and the children are confident and conscientious learners. Teachers receive good-quality feedback on their work. Leaders also moderate children's work with other local schools to ensure that it is accurately assessed.
- The links with parents are very well developed. Each parent receives an induction portfolio which explains the school's approach to teaching. Parents can communicate with staff about their child's progress at any point during the school year. Parents receive a detailed and comprehensive annual report about their child's achievements.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 120336 |
| DfE registration number | 855/6014 |
| Inspection number | 10033525 |

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.

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| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 8 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 116 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Mr S & Mrs R Assinder |
| Headteacher | Mr S & Mrs R Assinder |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £8,610 |
| Telephone number | 01827 880 725 |
| Website | twycrosshouseschool.org.uk |
| Email address | thehollies@twycrosshouseschool.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 24–26 June 2014 |

Information about this school

- This is a selective school. Pupils are required to take an assessment before they start at the school.
- The school is located in Twycross, Warwickshire, and is under the same ownership as the adjacent senior school. Mr S Assinder is the headteacher of the senior school.
- The school was first registered as an independent school in 1982. Some parents are former pupils.
- The school was last inspected in June 2014.
- The school has a swimming pool, a large sports hall and a multi-sports hard court. The school also uses Orton Wood Forest for outdoor education.

- The school has an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- There are currently 116 pupils between four and eight years of age. There are 57 girls and 59 boys.
- There are no pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- There are two joint headteachers who are also co-proprietors of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons throughout the school. Two lessons were jointly observed with a school leader, and inspectors observed the feedback of leaders to the teachers.
- Meetings were held with the proprietors, the deputy headteacher, the SENCo and two groups of teachers. Inspectors observed pupils at breaks and lunchtimes, and spoke to two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work from all four year groups. They also reviewed school policies, teachers' planning, attendance and documents related to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 19 responses of pupils through the Ofsted point-in-time survey. They also spoke with parents during the inspection and took account of the 33 responses to Parent View and the Ofsted free-text service to parents. An inspector also held a telephone call with a parent.

Inspection team

Martin Finch, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Aileen King

Ofsted Inspector

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