

# School inspection report

3 to 5 December 2024

## **Stratford Preparatory School**

Church House

Old Town

Stratford-upon-Avon

Warwickshire

CV37 6BG

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of the school. The successful working relationship with school leaders creates a bright, vibrant and welcoming environment. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), show confidence and a high-level of self-esteem. They are happy and secure.
2. The school's facilities are carefully managed. Ensuring effective safeguarding processes and the mitigation of risk are prioritised by the proprietor and school leaders. As a result, pupils' welfare is appropriately supported. Consequently, they feel safe in school, during educational visits and when they are working online.
3. The well-considered curriculum allows pupils to acquire knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. Leaders make effective use of checks on pupils' learning to track overall achievement. At all levels, pupils achieve well over their time in the school.
4. Across the school, including in the early years, teachers plan learning in most lessons that is carefully matched to pupils' needs. Expectations are high and this is reflected in the quality of pupils' work. However, occasionally, the mismatch between the intended learning and the activities set mean that some pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
5. Pupils understand and support the school's values, especially in showing mutual respect and in their recognition of the importance of making the right choices. In assemblies, form time and through the effectively delivered programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils willingly share their thoughts and opinions. Older pupils' care for and support of their younger peers is a notable feature of school life. Pupils behave well throughout the school.
6. Physical education (PE) and the range of extra-curricular activities allow pupils to develop their skills and acquire new interests. Pupils enjoy sporting competition. However, they are taught that good sportsmanship is more important than winning.
7. Well-planned teaching in the early years ensures that children make good progress in literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and the expressive arts and design. Adults know the children well. They promote their personal, social and emotional development in a warm, caring environment.
8. Pupils learn how to play their part in wider British society. The PSHE curriculum promotes key values such as tolerance and individual liberty. Pupils learn how democratic processes work and take part in activities which teach them about financial and economic matters.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

### Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that teaching and learning strategies are consistently well matched to the range of pupils' needs so that all pupils achieve their full potential.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. The new proprietor, together with school leaders, creates an environment based on mutual respect and high aspirations for all pupils. Well-understood aims underpin the ambitious plans for ongoing school development. Leaders are knowledgeable and skilled in carrying out their roles effectively and in promoting pupils' wellbeing.
10. The required policies and procedures are implemented appropriately and regularly updated. Directors have a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. This is based on their regular visits and termly meetings. These meetings are well informed by leaders' detailed reports. The directors provide suitable challenge and support. These contribute positively to school improvement and pupils' progress.
11. Children in the early years make good progress especially in numeracy and in learning about the sounds that letters make. Leaders provide a secure, welcoming and supportive environment. Well-planned learning experiences, based on knowledge of individual needs, promote the children's emotional, intellectual and physical wellbeing. Staff make suitable use of indoor and outdoor learning space. Appropriate supervision ensures that the children's safety and security are prioritised. At the beginning and end of the school day, staff are available to parents for informal discussion of the children's development and wellbeing.
12. There is a suitable risk management policy supported by risk assessments covering the premises and a range of educational activities. Leaders review these to ensure that risks are suitably mitigated. They provide staff with appropriate guidance on completing any risk assessments required.
13. Leaders ensure the effective implementation of a suitable complaints policy. They respond to any parental concerns in a timely manner. Detailed records are maintained of all complaints and the actions taken to resolve them, whether formal or informal.
14. Leaders provide appropriate support for pupils who have SEND. They ensure that the school fulfils its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. An appropriate accessibility plan takes account of pupils' needs.
15. Leaders maintain positive, effective relationships with a range of external agencies. They provide local authorities with information about admissions and pupils' academic performance. Guidance on safeguarding matters is sought when needed. Leaders work closely with professionals, such as educational psychologists and speech and language therapists, to support pupils who have SEND.
16. Information available on the school's website provides parents with access to the school's policies and contact details for key staff and directors. Regular parents' meetings and detailed written reports offer parents with valuable information about pupils' progress and attainment, as well as targets for their further development. Secure social media messaging provides parents with informal written and photographic records of their children's experience of school life.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

#### **17. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. The curriculum is effective in developing pupils' knowledge and skills across a suitably broad range of subjects. In science, pupils think deeply about the content that they are learning. They use appropriate subject-specific vocabulary, which they apply to the wider world when, for example, using Darwin's theories to explain contemporary environmental changes. Pupils' knowledge and skills in mathematics and English are well developed. This helps to prepare them for their transition to senior school. Cross-curricular work in English, geography and history is particularly effective. These opportunities for pupils to make connections across different subjects stimulate intellectual discussion and allow them to apply their learning in different contexts. Pupils also develop their creative and technical abilities, for example, in producing sculptures in the style of Giacometti and in learning how to bake different kinds of bread.
19. Knowledgeable, enthusiastic teachers plan learning carefully. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their independence through well-structured activities. Most teachers take appropriate account of pupils' individual needs. They provide a range of different tasks based on pupils' knowledge, skills and confidence. As a result, pupils think deeply about their work and show high levels of engagement. However, sometimes, the delivery of the intended learning is not of a consistently high standard. Where this happens, teachers do not always match learning to pupils' needs as effectively as they could. This includes, for example, in not making the best use of resources, or their expectations of some pupils are too low. In these instances, a few pupils lose concentration and do not make as much progress as they should.
20. In the early years, a well-planned curriculum ensures that children make good progress. Teachers respond thoughtfully to children's interests as they develop understanding of early mathematics and the sounds that letters make. Children are well supported in their personal, social and emotional development through creative play. Children develop their speech and language skills through adults' carefully chosen vocabulary and purposeful interaction with them.
21. Pupils who have SEND are well supported. Teachers identify their needs early and ensure that learning is adapted to meet these needs. Teachers' high expectations give these pupils confidence, so they make good progress over time.
22. The small number of pupils who require support because they speak English as an additional language (EAL) benefit from well-planned activities. These include pre-teaching of topics, individual work to check understanding and the use of pictures to help build vocabulary.
23. The school's assessment framework tracks pupils' achievement. Regular checks on learning in English, reading, spelling, mathematics, science and verbal and non-verbal reasoning show that pupils make good progress. Results in end of unit tests and pupils' work confirm their good progress in other subjects.
24. Highly personalised feedback from teachers ensures that pupils know what to do to improve their work. Pupils use their teachers' guidance to check that they understand the principal concepts and processes taught. Teachers set helpful targets for ongoing improvements.
25. There is a variety of extra-curricular clubs open to all pupils in Years 2 to 6. Pupils work collaboratively across different age groups. They enjoy gaining new skills and interests in activities such as cookery, multi-sports, Mandarin and Spanish.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

**26. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

27. The school's ethos and values prioritise pupils' mental and emotional wellbeing. Pupils support and champion each other in the cohesive community. They readily share in their peers' successes. Teachers treat pupils with kindness and compassion. As a result, pupils are confident happy, and at ease with themselves and with each other.
28. Leaders incorporate effective relationships education within the comprehensive, whole-school PSHE education programme. Parents are consulted about the well-planned schemes of work. Pupils develop an understanding of key issues, such as different family structures, building friendships and personal growth and change.
29. In PSHE more broadly, pupils learn about, for example, the importance of healthy eating, sleep and the contribution that these factors make to good mental health and resilience. Pupils benefit from healthy snacks and the balanced diet provided in the dining hall. In the early years, staff teach the children about the importance of oral hygiene.
30. The PE curriculum meets pupils' needs. All pupils are supported to participate. They understand the importance of good sportsmanship and healthy competition through competitive and non-competitive events. Appropriately, great emphasis is always placed on respect, in line with the school's values. The PE curriculum ensures that pupils maintain their physical health and continue to build on their sense of wellbeing.
31. Consistently thoughtful behaviour management contributes constructively to the positive conduct which is evident throughout the school. Instances of bullying and unkindness between pupils are rare. These are dealt with promptly by school leaders if they occur. Pupils who behave inappropriately are encouraged to reflect on their actions, to apologise and to do the right thing in the future. Pupils are confident in their teachers' support. Appropriate systems and procedures help them to raise any concerns. Trusted adults respond thoughtfully and promptly.
32. Leaders appoint all Year 6 pupils as prefects. This ensures that pupils have meaningful positions of responsibility. Prefects chair the school council and the eco councils. They also determine weekly kindness awards for younger pupils and present certificates in assembly. The care shown by older pupils towards their younger peers is notable. Leaders listen to pupils' ideas and take appropriate action in response to their suggestions.
33. The proprietor ensures that the school premises are well maintained and that suitable external checks are implemented. Leaders act appropriately to mitigate the risk of fire. There are termly drills so that pupils know how to respond to emergencies. Effective supervision ensures that pupils are safe throughout the school day.
34. Staff are properly trained in first aid, including in the early years where all staff are qualified paediatric first aiders. There is suitable medical accommodation. Pupils receive appropriate medical support, when required. Staff maintain accurate records of the administration of any medication or first aid.



35. Leaders understand the importance of pupils attending school. They follow up on any unexplained absences. Admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained. The local authority is informed about pupil transfers in line with statutory requirements.
36. Early years staff cultivate warm, caring relationships with the children. Carefully planned activities support children's physical development, while building their confidence and resilience. Cutting, drawing and painting, as well as imaginative play outdoors, develop both their fine and gross motor skills. Well-qualified staff engage the children in conversation about their activities and model appropriate vocabulary to support communication and language development.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 37. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

38. Assemblies, form time, religious studies and the PSHE education curriculum develop pupils' awareness of social and cultural differences. Pupils explore contemporary issues such as racism, gender inequality, neurodiversity and the challenge of mass migration. They are taught about the wider world and encouraged to be intellectually curious about other countries, faiths and traditions. Leaders promote British values, such as democracy and the rule of law. They explore with pupils how this society differs from other cultures and societies. Pupils learn that it is wrong to discriminate against people based on race, colour or different sexualities. As a result, pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other's differences. They have a clear sense of personal responsibility.
39. Pupils understand democratic principles. They vote, for example, on which of their peers should take on positions of responsibility, such as form captains. Members of the school and eco councils are also elected by the pupils. The school held a mock election so that pupils could learn practically about how democracy works. Older pupils studied the manifestos of the Democratic and Republican Parties in the United States of America. This was so that they could hold informed discussions about the programmes and ambitions of the principal presidential candidates.
40. Children in the early years develop their knowledge of British institutions and wider society through talks from the fire service, as well as visits to banks and the Post Office. Through educational visits, such as to a local farm, they learn about other people's lives and build their social skills in conversations with different adults.
41. Pupils learn about the importance of involvement in and support for the local community. Choirs sing at a nearby home for the elderly. They raise funds for the town's foodbank and other local and national charities. Pupils' sense of social involvement is enhanced through taking part in the local Armistice Day ceremony, celebrations of Shakespeare's work and the town's festivities to mark the switching on of the Christmas lights.
42. Pupils develop their understanding of finance and economics in ways that prepare them for later life. In the early years, children begin to learn about money through role playing visits to the shops. Older children identify how we earn money and keep it safe. They learn about the different things we need to spend our money on. Through activities such as the Christmas Fayre and a school 'Bake Off' competition, pupils have opportunities to develop their project management, budgeting and money management skills, including pricing and responsibility for giving change.
43. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Each year there is a moving up day when they meet their new teacher. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 receive specific support through examination preparation and interview practice as they prepare for progression to senior schools. Most pupils are successful in securing places at the senior schools of their choice.
44. Pupils develop their understanding of different careers. Early years children, for example, learn through a 'people who help us' topic. The PSHE programme includes a unit on their 'dreams and goals'. Older pupils benefit from a careers fair at the school in which they discover more about possible career options in later life.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society**

**45. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

46. Safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively throughout the school, including in the early years. Safeguarding leaders, who are members of the school's senior management team, ensure an appropriate policy is available for parents to view on the website. Regular training is in place for leaders and all staff. This includes at induction and through regular updates. This means that pupils' wellbeing is prioritised consistently.
47. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They are knowledgeable about the signs which may indicate a cause for concern. Reporting procedures are well understood. Staff take prompt and appropriate action when necessary. Safeguarding leaders liaise effectively with children's services and the local authority as appropriate. When required, leaders make referrals to external agencies in a timely manner.
48. Leaders ensure that all required pre-employment checks are completed before any adults begin working at the school. They maintain an accurate single central record of appointments. Effective oversight by the proprietor ensures that this record and the personnel files are checked regularly.
49. Governors are appropriately trained. They receive updated reports from safeguarding leaders each term. Governors are also informed of any referrals to the local authority and receive an annual report on safeguarding matters from the school leaders.
50. Leaders ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring of the school's internet. The school's curriculum provides pupils with guidance on action they should take to stay safe, including when online. Pupils can raise concerns with trusted adults who know them well and act promptly and thoughtfully to provide suitable support.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 51. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	Stratford Preparatory School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	937/6094
<b>Address</b>	Stratford Preparatory School Church House Old Town Stratford-upon-Avon Warwickshire CV37 6BG
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<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://stratfordprep.co.uk">http://stratfordprep.co.uk</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Newman Schools Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Wynford Dore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Daniel Brewer
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	61
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 to 15 October 2021

## Information about the school

52. Stratford Preparatory School is a co-educational day school. It is located in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher was appointed in September 2024. The school is a member of the Newman School Limited group which acquired the school in September 2023. Mr Wynford Dore, a director, acts a Chair of Governors.
53. There are 20 children in the early years comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
54. The school has identified 10 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
55. English is an additional language for nine pupils.
56. The school states its aims are to develop the happiness, confidence, skills and knowledge of each pupil so they can be successful in their aspirations.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

3 to 5 December 2024

57. A team of two inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

58. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with a governor
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

59. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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