

Saint Pierre School

16 Leigh Road, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 1LE

Inspection dates 7–9 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate school

- Leadership, management and governance of the school are inadequate because the regulations for leadership and management are not met.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. Safeguarding requirements are not met. The proprietor has not ensured that procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils reflect the latest national guidance and are implemented effectively.
- The early years setting is inadequate because safeguarding and measures to secure children's health and safety are inadequate. Children have limited resources to develop their imaginative and physical play when playing outside.
- The school's work to provide for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate because it does not implement its health and safety policy effectively. The school's procedures to identify and manage potential risks and hazards are inadequate.
- Occasionally, tasks provided for pupils are not well matched to their needs, so that they are too easy for some and too difficult for others. Not all teachers follow the school's marking policy consistently.
- The school does not provide or make available the information for parents required by regulations.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils of all abilities make good progress and many are successful in gaining places in selective senior schools.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well, have high expectations and usually provide engaging activities for their pupils.
- The behaviour of the pupils is outstanding. They are enthusiastic learners, keen to make progress and they apply themselves very well.
- Parents are highly satisfied with the education and the care provided for their children.
- The personal development of pupils is outstanding. They are confident, respect the values and feelings of others and have excellent social skills.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and varied curriculum enhanced by a good range of visits that support learning.
- The early years setting ensures that children make good progress through carefully planned learning activities.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a day’s notice.
- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, including joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the proprietors, senior leaders, the designated safeguarding lead and a group of teachers.
- Inspectors met with two groups of representative pupils.
- Information relating to pupils’ progress and attainment was evaluated, along with samples of their written work.
- In order to check the school’s compliance with the independent school standards, a wide range of documentary evidence was scrutinised, including school policies, behaviour logs, staff recruitment records and evidence of the monitoring of teaching.
- The inspector checked whether a compliant safeguarding policy was available on the school’s website.
- The inspectors took into account the views of parents in meetings before the school day, the 66 responses to the online Parent View and views expressed in the 15 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Richard Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Bailey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Saint Pierre School is an independent day preparatory school for boys and girls aged between two and 11 years of age. There are currently 120 children on roll.
- The school is located in a large, detached, Victorian house in Leigh-on-Sea. Its facilities include a multi-purpose hall. The school uses local sports venues.
- Pupils mostly transfer to selective maintained schools at the age of 11.
- The school aims 'to work in effective collaboration with parents and pupils to ensure that each individual child is enabled to develop their true potential to the full in all areas of the curriculum.'
- There are 36 children in the early years setting, 25 of whom attend on a part-time basis. Thirty-three of these receive government funding for three and four-year-olds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above that found nationally.
- Pupils come from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds that reflect those of the local area. None speaks English as an additional language.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provider.
- The school was last inspected in January 2012, when its quality of education was judged to be good. There were a significant number of regulatory failures at that point. These were subsequently addressed by the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Immediately improve the safeguarding arrangements for pupils through the implementation of rigorous procedures that meet the regulatory requirements for independent schools and the statutory requirements for the early years by:
 - ensuring that the proprietors conduct a thorough annual review of safeguarding procedures
 - implementing a safeguarding policy that reflects current guidance in keeping pupils safe
 - ensuring that the designated safeguarding leaders have up-to-date training that is renewed within the required timescales.
- Immediately strengthen the procedures for the oversight of health and safety, in particular the identification of potential risks and hazards, to meet the regulatory requirements for independent schools and the statutory requirements for the early years.
- Ensure that parents and prospective parents:
 - are provided with all the required information concerning the school's safeguarding procedures
 - are made aware that the school's policies concerning the provision for pupils with educational, health or care plans and details of the school's medical policies and procedures are available if requested.
- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - following the school marking policy in consistently providing feedback to pupils on how to improve their work
 - ensuring that tasks are not too easy or too hard.
- Ensure that children in the early years are provided with more opportunities for their physical and creative development.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how the relevant aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietors must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State

(paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).

- The proprietors must ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- The proprietors must ensure the effective implementation of the school's risk assessment policy and that the risks identified are addressed (paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16 (b)).
- The proprietors must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (paragraph 25)
- The proprietors must ensure the particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 is published on the school's internet website. Parents must also be made aware that the arrangements for medical care and for providing for pupils with education, health and care plans are available if requested (paragraphs 32(1) and 32(1)(b and c).
- The proprietors must ensure 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; fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Independent School Standards are met consistently; and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1) (a), 34(1) (b) and 34(1) (c)).

The school must meet the statutory requirements for the early years

- Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children. These should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) (paragraph 3.4).
- Providers must ensure that their premises are fit for purpose (paragraph 3.54).
- Providers must ensure that they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risks (paragraph 3.64).
- Providers must make the following information available to parents and/or carers: the safeguarding procedures; how the setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities and details of the provider's medical policies and procedures (paragraph 3.73).

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Not all of the regulations and early years statutory requirements are met. Consequently, the requirements concerning the leadership duties of the proprietor and school leaders are also not met and leadership of the school is inadequate overall.
- Leaders have failed to implement the latest statutory safeguarding procedures and guidance issued by the Department for Education. Leaders have also failed to ensure that procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors are adequate. The school's health and safety and risk assessment policies are not implemented with sufficient rigour and risks on site are not identified.
- The school does not provide some of the information it must provide to parents, in particular that relating to safeguarding, to the medical care of pupils and how the school provides for pupils with special educational needs or who have an education, health and care plan.
- Leaders responded quickly and positively so that many of these shortcomings were addressed, once pointed out to them, during the inspection. However, at the time of the inspection the safeguarding policy on the school's website was out-of-date.
- Leaders are highly visible, and provide good role models. They know their pupils very well, and are highly dedicated to maintaining the distinctive ethos of the school, ensuring that pupils achieve high academic standards and an excellent level of personal development. The leaders have ensured the school is a warm, welcoming and supportive community. There are high expectations of manners and behaviour.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the school, and the development plan clearly identifies areas for improvement. For example, the role of middle leaders is currently evolving, and they are taking on greater responsibility for the development of their specialist areas. They have responded enthusiastically to this opportunity, and show a good understanding of how to improve provision.
- The recommendations of the previous inspection, which concerned other regulatory failings with welfare, health and safety, have all been met.
- Leaders evaluate teaching effectively through a programme of formal lesson observations, regular visits to classrooms and a scrutiny of pupils' written work. Although recently introduced, this process is already having a positive impact on standards, because areas for development are identified and progress is monitored. Teachers are also provided with opportunities to share good practice, through joint observations and reviews of written work, as well as attending relevant training courses. Teachers value this and say that it helps them to improve their professional practice.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is well suited to the needs of pupils and prepares them well for the next stage in their education. There is a strong emphasis on developing good literacy and numeracy skills, and these skills are used effectively to support work in other subjects. Achievement is high in subjects such as French and geography because the leadership has ensured that these are taught by teachers with high levels of subject knowledge and expertise. The curriculum is enriched by frequent opportunities for pupils to become involved in sport, drama and music, inside and outside of school.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding, and a notable strength of the school. Many elements of the curriculum promote the pupils' high levels of spiritual awareness and self-esteem. Their excellent behaviour reflects the school's work to instil a strong sense of fairness and morality, strong social skills and cultural awareness.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in British society. Their lessons in current affairs provide an excellent opportunity to discuss topics such as the election, world events and the dangers of extremism. This is supported by assemblies and work in other lessons. In a history lesson, older pupils discussed the role of the trade union movement in Britain during the 1970s, showing a good understanding of opposing viewpoints.

- Pupils show a great interest in and respect for other faiths, and were keen to discuss how much they had learned during a visit to local places of worship. Leaders actively promote the fundamental values of individual liberty, the rule of law and democracy, tolerance and respect. They ensure that there is equal opportunity to learn for all pupils. There is no discrimination.
- The views of parents about the leadership of the school are highly positive, and almost all would recommend this school to another parent. The staff are proud of their school, and almost all feel that it is well led and managed.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The governance of the school is undertaken by the proprietors. It is inadequate. The procedures for the formal review and monitoring of the policies for safeguarding, health and safety of pupils lack rigour, and the regulatory responsibilities of the proprietors in this respect are not met.

The proprietors have recognised the need to gain additional expertise, and are in the process of recruiting an advisory board to support them in their role.

The proprietors know the school very well as they also have senior leadership roles within the school. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching in the school, and its impact on school data for pupils' progress. They are well-known to all pupils, staff and parents, who find them approachable and supportive. They ensure there are adequate levels of staffing and resources. However they have not ensured that the premises are maintained so that the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. For example, there were shortcomings in the storage of materials and in the safety requirements linked to upstairs windows at the time of the inspection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school is highly effective in promoting high standards, and this is confirmed by the views of parents and staff. Pupils are extremely polite, and always greet visitors warmly. In conversations with adults they are mature and confident. They take pride in their distinctive uniform, wearing it smartly. Pupils of all ages relate well to each other. This is a distinctive feature of the school.
- Behaviour in lessons is also outstanding. The pupils are enthusiastic learners, keen to ask questions and to play an active role in their learning. They respond promptly to instructions and demonstrate strong co-operative learning skills.
- The school's behaviour records indicate that serious sanctions are rare, and managed appropriately. Pupils respond well to the system of rewards.
- Attendance is high and managed well. The school follows up promptly any absences.
- Staff know their pupils very well, and are able to provide prompt and effective support. Any concerns are communicated quickly amongst staff, and there are excellent links with home. Parents indicate they were highly appreciative of the care provided for their children. Pupils know that there is always someone to turn to if needed.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. The procedures for safeguarding are inadequate and the relevant regulations are not met. The safeguarding policy does not meet current requirements. The procedures for referring potential safeguarding incidents to the appropriate authorities are not clear. The training for the designated senior leaders is out of date. The review of the safeguarding policy is not carried out effectively by the proprietor.
- The school's procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors are inadequate. The implementation of the school's health and safety and risk assessment policies lacks sufficient rigour and

potential hazards are not identified. During the inspection, several issues were identified. The school took steps to remedy these. An issue of site security was also raised during the inspection. This also was addressed.

- Safeguarding checks to ensure the suitability of staff are carried out and recorded appropriately.
- The procedures to reduce the risks from fire are effective. They have been strengthened following the recommendations of the previous inspection. Equipment is tested and serviced at the appropriate intervals, exit routes are clear and well-signed and regular evacuation practices are carried out and correctly recorded.
- Medical arrangements meet requirements. They have been improved since the previous inspection. Staff have appropriate first-aid training and there are first-aid kits located throughout the school. Suitable medical facilities are available for the treatment of sick or injured pupils, detailed records are kept and parents informed about any incidents.
- Pupils believe that the school helps them to keep safe and their parents agree. Pupils show an excellent awareness of risk, and are alert to the dangers from deep water, fire and road traffic. Younger pupils cover water safety as part of a topic on beaches. All pupils learn about e-safety and how to stay safe online and have a good understanding of this. Older pupils, for example, had produced an imaginative film warning of the potential risks as part of the programme that prepares them for life in their senior schools.
- There is no evidence of any bullying, prejudice or extremism. Pupils confirm this. They report that teachers know them well, and are quick to intervene if issues arise.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. They foster the pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning by establishing excellent, warm and supportive relationships with them. This all leads to pupils' good progress and achievement.
- Teachers know their pupils well and lessons are generally well planned. Assessment information is used effectively to monitor pupils' progress. Teachers are aware of the challenging requirements of the selective entrance examinations taken by many older pupils, and match their expectations accordingly.
- Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to develop their learning skills through a wide range of learning activities. Homework is usually well-matched to pupils' current learning levels and next steps.
- Teachers help to develop pupils' high standards of numeracy and literacy through tasks in other subjects, such as through opportunities for extended writing and to apply mathematical knowledge in practical situations. Teachers have high expectations of grammar and spelling in all written tasks. As a result pupils' work is well presented, neat and accurate.
- All staff have strong subject knowledge. This helps to enhance learning as they are able to initiate discussions around the topic that broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding. Subject specialist teachers help to ensure that pupils' achievements are high in their particular subjects.
- During lessons, teachers use a variety of effective question techniques to review previous learning and explore pupils' knowledge and understanding. This information is usually used to adjust planning well and also to ensure that individual pupils receive appropriate support. However, occasionally, tasks teachers set do not enable good progress. Some work for the less able pupils is too challenging for them, and some is too easy for the most-able pupils. When this happens, progress slows.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for individual learners, taking the time to support

them in carrying out a task, or finding new ways to explain a particular concept. They receive detailed information from the learning support staff to help them do this more effectively.

- Teachers promote well the values of British society, and present a balanced view of topics in order to develop pupils' understanding of the need to respect the views of others. They also ensure that pupils develop a greater knowledge of other cultures.
- Teachers organise a wide variety of trips to enhance pupils' learning. The annual residential trips for the older pupils also provide additional opportunities for them to develop teamwork skills and knowledge of foreign cultures.
- The views of pupils and their parents are highly positive. They appreciate the extra time that teachers take to support pupils' learning. Many commented on the effective use of practical activities that engage their interest and make lessons enjoyable.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and their comments usually highlight areas of success and praise their efforts. However, teachers do not always follow the school's marking policy fully, in that they do not always indicate what pupils can do to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' good achievement results in resounding success in gaining places at selective senior schools, in response to effective teaching and pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning.
- The school's own assessments show good levels of achievement from pupils' individual starting points. Inspectors checked work over the year, discussed work with pupils, and considered the school's data. They judged that pupils' progress overall is good, and their attainment at the ages of seven and 11 in both English and mathematics is above national expectations. There is some variation between age groups and subjects.
- The achievement of pupils with disabilities or who have special educational needs is good, including those with educational, health or care plans. They receive effective support to ensure their needs are met. Individual pupils make even better progress because the support is so well targeted on their needs.
- The most-able pupils also make good progress. In some cases, notably amongst the older pupils, their achievement is outstanding. This can be seen by comparing their starting points with the results of their entry examinations to senior schools, and in the perceptive, detailed and accurate independent work they produce.
- Pupils' levels of numeracy and literacy are good, as all teachers share similar expectations and take advantage of opportunities to apply and reinforce these skills across all subjects. Reading levels are good. Pupils benefit from many opportunities to read and derive enjoyment from books.
- Pupils have strong learning skills. They have good linguistic and oral skills, and can use computers effectively. Their standards of presentation and handwriting are high and they take great pride in their work.
- The achievement of the pupils in extra-curricular activities is outstanding. Pupils have enjoyed success in music and public speaking. Many sing in the choir, sometimes in national events. They are all involved in various drama productions and other public performances, showing high levels of confidence. They enthusiastically take part in a wide range of sports, and have been successful in areas as diverse as swimming and cross-country running.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- The leadership and management of the early years provision is inadequate because failings with regard to safeguarding and the implementation of the health and safety policies also mean the statutory requirements for early years are not met.
- The leaders of the setting are successful in creating a warm and supportive environment that is welcoming to all. Children arrive enthusiastically in the morning, and have excellent relationships with all staff. The children are well supervised. They behave well.
- Parents indicate that they are highly satisfied with the provision, and feel that staff are approachable and concerns are dealt with promptly and sensitively. They particularly appreciate the opportunity to monitor and contribute to their children's learning journeys (information on a child's development and learning) through an online system. Teachers keep them well-informed about the progress of their children. Staff make accurate assessments of children's progress in all areas of learning, using these to good effect to spur children on to achieve even more.
- Children enter the setting with levels of development broadly in line with age-related expectations. By the time they leave, most have achieved a good level of development, and many have exceeded this, indicating that they make good progress. This includes those children with disabilities, those who have special educational needs and the most-able children.
- During the inspection, the older children were able to write their own poems about frogs, whilst the youngest showed that they understand beach safety and were able to work well together and organise their own beach shop to sell ice creams to each other.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan activities that show a good awareness of individual children, their interests and needs. The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is good; children use effective strategies when faced with unfamiliar words, so that many have reading skills that are well developed by for their age by the time they move to Year 1.
- The children have highly positive attitudes to learning, showing curiosity, enthusiasm and perseverance when engaged in their activities. Children cooperate with each other, share well and respect others and their property.
- The outside area for the setting is shared with other year groups and has limited resources. This means that opportunities for creative and imaginative learning and physical activities to support children's development are limited in this outdoor environment.
- Their good level of development, good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning ensure that children are ready and well-prepared for Year 1. The transition to Year 1 is managed sensitively. Activities are arranged so that the children become familiar with their new teachers and classroom, and so they quickly settle to their new routines and gain confidence.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the GOV.UK website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	115408
Inspection number	462910
DfE registration number	882/6007
Type of school	Day
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Number of part time pupils	25
Proprietor	Chris Perkins and Kurt Davies
Headteacher	Chris Perkins
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2012
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,450 - £7,470
Telephone number	01702 474164
Email address	info@saintpierreschool.com

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Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

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