

Kimichi School

Eastbourne House, 111 Yardley Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B27 6LL

Inspection dates

26–28 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor has ensured that all independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, and her deputy have built a cohesive team of staff which has a strong commitment to improving pupils' life chances. The team's skills in teaching, learning and behavioural support ensure that pupils make good progress.
- The headteacher has provided a clear sense of purpose and vision. Music is central to the curriculum for all pupils and it effectively develops their creative skills, as well as strong social skills.
- Trustees and governors have provided effective support to the leadership team. However, governors have not challenged the leadership team well enough on pupils' progress and achievement.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to question and deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils enjoy their classroom learning. They cooperate well with staff and engage positively in the activities provided.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points as a result of effective teaching and a curriculum that is relevant to their needs.
- Safeguarding is effective. Systems are robust and staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe.
- Pupils make strong improvements in their personal development. Behaviour is outstanding because pupils make rapid, sustained improvement when they join the school.
- Personalised careers education, advice and guidance prepare pupils well for their next steps in education or employment. However, careers education is not planned effectively enough to ensure that all pupils have a broad understanding of possible education and employment opportunities.
- Verbal feedback in lessons helps pupils to identify gaps in their knowledge and understanding and address those gaps with confidence. Not all teachers give written feedback in line with the school's policy on feedback and marking.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They understand how democracy works and readily exhibit tolerance and respect for people from different backgrounds. The school is vigilant in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities and that no one is subject to any form of discrimination.
- The majority of parents are highly supportive of the school. They say that staff understand pupils' individual needs, teaching is adapted appropriately and pupils learn valuable life skills.

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?

- Ensure that careers education, advice and guidance are planned and provided effectively so that all pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Ensure that governors rigorously challenge the leadership team on the progress and achievement of pupils.
- Ensure that all teachers give written feedback in line with the school's feedback and marking policy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Trustees, governors and leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- An ambitious culture of high expectations within a warm, welcoming atmosphere has had a positive impact on the aspirations of pupils. Pupils respond well to the high level of challenge in the classroom and they are enthusiastic learners.
- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning in a supportive and constructive way so that teachers can improve their practice through discussion and team teaching. They encourage teachers to reflect frequently on their work and on how improvements can be made.
- Leaders and teachers know the pupils well and plan and provide their lessons with a sound understanding of pupils' learning needs. Where possible, teachers use information from previous schools to establish pupils' starting points. Teachers informally assess pupils in lessons when they join the school. Records of each pupil's behaviour and starting points are thorough and provide a reliable basis for discussion about their academic and social progress.
- Good systems are in place to track individual pupils' progress from their starting points. The headteacher is able to identify the progress of individual pupils easily and to ensure that, when required, interventions are put in place.
- School leaders have used information on pupils' progress and achievement well to inform development planning. A review of the curriculum and the progress of current pupils has led to planning for increased accreditation opportunities below level 2.
- The broad and rich curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' progress. All pupils learn music and play one or more musical instruments. Learning an instrument and participating in performances outside the school support the pupils' learning in all subjects across the school. This is because the discipline, concentration and teamwork that they develop have a direct impact on their positive attitudes to learning.
- As well as specific classes in English and mathematics, pupils develop literacy and numeracy skills well across the curriculum and apply them in a range of contexts. The school has a small library and the headteacher encourages pupils to read for pleasure.
- Teachers promote British values well through the curriculum. Pupils' experiences and learning contribute effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The personal, health, social and economic (PSHE) education programme includes a wide range of age appropriate topics, for example income tax for Year 10 and 11 pupils and healthy eating for Year 7 pupils. Pupils are growing vegetables in the garden, which they will donate to charity. Trips and visits provide further opportunities to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils have visited the Houses of Parliament and undertaken musical performances at charity events. Pupils develop their social and moral skills well through the school council. They discuss issues affecting the school and make decisions, thus taking part in the effective running of the school.

Governance

- Governors have recently reviewed the governance structure. They have taken action to introduce subcommittees and extend the number and expertise of governors so that all governors have the skills required to be increasingly effective.
- The chair of governors is highly involved with the work of the school and meets the headteacher regularly to discuss the school's work. Governors are committed to ongoing improvement.
- The governance team is not yet sufficiently rigorous in challenging the school leadership on the progress and achievement of pupils. Governors do not know how much progress different groups of pupils make.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding policy reflects the latest guidance and is published on the school's website.
- All staff give high priority to the safeguarding and protection of children. The strong culture of safeguarding ensures that pupils are safe and protected from harm.
- The school works closely with parents, carers and external organisations to ensure that pupils are safe and supported.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching encourages pupils well to develop positive attitudes to learning. All pupils spoken to by the inspector said how much they enjoyed lessons. The informal, relaxed atmosphere that teachers establish puts pupils at their ease so that they are more receptive to learning. Pupils respond readily to the increasing academic expectations as they become more settled in the school. This contributes to the overall good progress that they make.
- Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils skilfully and sensitively. Warm and supportive relationships allow learning to happen successfully. Staff know their pupils well and use flexible approaches to meet their individual needs very effectively. Pupils value the confidence that adults have in them and they try hard to do their best.
- Teachers' skilful use of questioning helps pupils to think carefully about what they are learning. In a mathematics lesson, the teacher asked pupils to consider the meanings of mathematical terms by thinking about other similar words that they use in everyday life. She ensured that they understood the concepts through well-constructed questions later in the lesson.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan and provide learning effectively to meet individual learning needs. They make the objectives of the lesson clear to pupils and guide them systematically through appropriate tasks and activities that help them to achieve successfully. Teachers support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities well.

- Teachers use interesting illustrations to explain concepts, and everyday examples to aid pupils' understanding. Pupils who have not been successful in previous schools develop confidence in their teachers and re-engage effectively in learning. They are sufficiently self-possessed to discuss their ideas and to ask appropriate questions, for example when discussing different kinds of sources in a history lesson.
- Parents receive information regularly about how their child is progressing. They welcome the open culture of the school, which encourages them to contact staff if they have any concerns.
- Teachers provide useful verbal feedback that supports and challenges pupils' understanding. However, the use of the school's chosen method of marking in books is inconsistent, so pupils do not always know how to improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils often arrive at the school with low self-esteem and disillusioned with education when they have not been successful in other settings. The strong nurture, support and guidance provided by the school ensures that pupils become confident and happy individuals. Pupils know how to be successful and they eagerly discuss their learning because they are proud of the school and of their achievements.
- Many pupils at the school have a history of non-attendance or disrupted periods of previous education. Consequently, they have failed to thrive in previous schools. When they first arrive, many pupils do not display the skills that will enable them to learn. Leaders rightly focus initially on helping pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem so that they learn strategies that encourage positive learning behaviour.
- Pupils run the school council, which has a strong impact on the pupils' confidence and self-esteem. They discuss the way that the school is managed and suggest improvements. In one meeting, the pupils discussed the meaning of bullying and a pupil explained to the inspector that bullying was extremely rare at the school. Another pupil said, 'The school council works. People respect and listen to you.' The process empowers the pupils, and they respond very positively to their responsibilities.
- Staff and pupils use school council meetings and whole-school assemblies to introduce relevant themes that address pupils' emotional well-being and safety, for example the bombing in Manchester. Staff encourage pupils to be reflective and to consider the consequences of their attitudes and actions. This has a strong impact on their personal development.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have opportunities to undertake good-quality work experience placements. They are well supported to make informed choices about future education or employment. However, age-appropriate planning for careers education is not in place for all pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- They display caring attitudes to each other and are polite and courteous to visitors. The school's exciting and dynamic environment inspires all pupils to learn. Classrooms are calm and enable purposeful learning to take place.
- Pupils rarely miss school and are punctual. Unauthorised absence is rare. Individual pupils increase their attendance, often significantly, compared to their previous placements.
- The reward system has been agreed by the school council and any rare lapses in behaviour are managed by the pupils themselves and, for example, may result in missing a trip. Pupils are committed to the success of the school; they work together to ensure that each pupil has respect for the staff and each other so that behaviour overall is exemplary.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils are making at least good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects. A culture of high expectations for pupils to achieve and the teaching of skills across the curriculum underpin good outcomes. Currently the school offers GCSE qualifications. Additional accreditation will be offered in the next academic year to ensure that pupils working at different levels have opportunities to gain qualifications to support them in their next steps in education or employment.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress. The individualised approach to learning and the quality of relationships with staff ensure that pupils are well supported. Extra funding is suitably planned to match individual needs.
- Teachers track pupils' progress in measurable steps, which ensures that none fall behind. The leadership team checks progress against individual targets every half term and teachers adjust their planning if pupils require more challenge or support.
- All pupils enjoy music, and a small number have achieved excellent results in music examinations. A few would like to follow a career in music and the school ensures that pupils engage in performances and have access to professional musicians who can guide them.
- Attainment in writing is low for a minority of pupils, relative to their ages, but the content of the work in lessons and books demonstrates that writing skills are improving. Pupils' fluency and understanding in reading is developing well because teachers encourage them to read in lessons.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. Teaching takes account of pupils' different abilities within small groups and teachers set work at the appropriate level so that pupils achieve well.
- Pupils carry out work that deepens their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils say that the work they do builds on what they know and challenges them to think more deeply.

School details

Unique reference number	141242
DfE registration number	330/6017
Inspection number	10047138

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	9 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Sally Alexander
Chair	Kirstie Berry
Headteacher	Sally Alexander
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,750
Telephone number	01216 795 298
Website	www.kimichischool.co.uk
Email address	kimichisom@gmail.com
Date of previous inspection	6 – 7 May 2015

Information about this school

- Kimichi school is a small independent day school situated in the Acocks Green area of Birmingham, in the buildings of a former preparatory school. The material change inspection of March 2018 recommended extension of the age range from 9 to 16 to 9 to 18 and a maximum of 60 pupils.
- The school specialises in developing pupils' musical skills as well as offering a broader curriculum comprising a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Currently there are no students aged 16 to 18 on the school roll, but in the next academic year the curriculum will be extended to include A-level subjects.

- Pupils at the school study at least one musical instrument and in some cases more.
- Pupils do not need to have had previous musical experience before entering the school. Some of the pupils arrive part way through the term, having experienced disruption to formal education. Pupils are able to join the school at any point in the academic year.
- Pupils are referred to the school by a number of local authorities, including Birmingham and Coventry.
- There are currently 18 pupils on roll aged between 9 and 16. Four pupils have identified SEN and/or disabilities. Two pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Seven part-time staff support two full-time members of staff for specialist subject teaching. The school does not use alternative provision, although it does use facilities at a local leisure centre, including changing rooms and showers for physical education.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.
- The school's last full inspection was in May 2015. All of the independent school standards were met and the school was judged good in all areas.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, who is also the proprietor, the deputy headteacher, the chair of governors and teachers.
- The inspector toured the school with the headteacher and carried out a check of the school's premises, including outside spaces.
- The inspector observed the learning of a number of pupils in lessons. One session was observed jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- The inspector spoke to individual pupils and held a meeting with them.
- The inspector observed a school council meeting.
- A range of pupils' books were scrutinised and a review of the school's assessment information was carried out.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, school policies and a number of documents relating to safeguarding.
- There were 15 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector took into account seven responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Andrea Quigley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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