

Willington School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Angela Corbett HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Willington is a non-selective, Christian-based preparatory school for up to 250 boys aged from four to 13 years. It was first established in Putney in 1885 and moved to its current premises in a built-up residential area in Wimbledon in South West London in 1990. There are currently 240 pupils on roll with 34 children in two Reception classes, 20 of whom are funded under the government's nursery scheme. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and a few are learning English as an additional language. The school and its nursery provision were last inspected in January 2008. This is the school's second full inspection by Ofsted.

The school's motto is 'education for life' and its stated aims are that 'Each boy is unique, and is encouraged to develop his talents in every area of school life and thus become a fulfilled and self-confident individual.'

Evaluation of the school

Willington School provides a good quality of education for all its pupils, including the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and successfully meets its stated aims. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they thoroughly enjoy school. Within the good curriculum there are outstanding opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences. This, combined with good teaching and assessment, ensures that pupils make good progress academically and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Good improvement has been made in most areas since the last inspection. The school meets all requirements relating to safeguarding children and almost all of the independent school regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. All the required areas of learning are covered with some very good provision; however, the design and technology curriculum is craft based and does not provide older pupils, in particular, with sufficient opportunities to develop research, analysis, design and evaluation skills. From Year 4, pupils receive entirely specialist teaching and those in Year 3 and below are

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

mainly taught by class teachers. Close account is taken of the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance, the National Curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 3 and Common Entrance examination requirements from Year 4. Well-planned support is provided for the small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are learning to speak English as an additional language so that they make similarly good progress to their peers. Schemes of work are detailed, closely followed by teachers and provide good progression routes to meet the needs of all pupils.

Personal, social, and health education, citizenship and religious education are taught across the curriculum with effective use of assemblies and tutorial time. This provision is now good and pupils now gain a broad understanding of other religions as well as Christianity. There is improved access to information and communication technology (ICT) with 10 computers in one classroom and new laptops are used both for teaching ICT and for learning in other subjects. Pupils develop good basic ICT skills, however, the school is working to improve the ICT curriculum and provide pupils with a broader range of experiences. An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and clubs exists, including the choir and numerous sports activities. Pupils also establish their own clubs, for example Spanish. The curriculum is further enriched for all year groups by a wide range of trips, visits and visitors. In the last year these have ranged from visits to the Wimbledon Synagogue and the Florence Nightingale Museum to a visiting journalist from a major national newspaper and a Chinese Mandarin. Pupils particularly enjoy the annual arts festival.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. Almost all teaching seen during the inspection was good or better. Teachers' good subject knowledge and their positive relationships with pupils are key strengths. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives which are routinely shared with pupils. Teachers move learning along at a brisk pace and the main activities are well matched to the pupils' ages, interests and needs so that they are fully engaged in their learning. Teachers are skilled in questioning to check and promote learning, although in some instances this is not sufficiently targeted to individuals within a class. Pupils make the best progress when lessons give them opportunities to work in groups or pairs, to make choices, and when frequent references are made back to the learning objectives enabling them to reflect on their progress.

Work to improve the quality of assessment and tracking of pupils' progress is better informing planning and beginning to accelerate progress. Pupils' work is frequently marked and they say their teachers give them good help and guidance both verbally and in writing. While teachers' comments provide praise and/or an explanation of errors there are few instances where an effective conversation about learning is developed so that pupils are clear about how they can improve their work. Pupils' work, teacher assessments and Common Entrance examination results show that they make good progress and achieve places at the schools of their choice, with an increasing number gaining scholarships.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are very proud of their school and get on well together in the very harmonious and friendly atmosphere, so they thoroughly enjoy each day. Their behaviour is outstanding and they show highly positive attitudes to learning. They are confident, articulate and keen to achieve. The many opportunities offered are highly valued, particularly in relation to sport and the arts, and promote their good cultural and outstanding social development. Their attendance is high, although this falls slightly at the beginning and ends of terms when some pupils are absent due to extended family holidays. A notable development since the last inspection is the school council which includes pupils from Years 1 to 8. It is very active in organising events, for example the monkey drawing competition, and improving life in school by introducing a playtime games rota and new classroom clocks. It is leading work on anti-bullying and raising funds for charities that everyone has voted for. Pupils further contribute as prefects, class monitors and buddies, although their contribution to the local community is less wide-ranging and centres on performances for pupils from local schools or participation in inter-school matches.

Spiritual development is strong because opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and religions have been extended so that pupils can reflect maturely and sensibly about a wide range of issues. Pupils learn about democracy, public institutions and services through lessons, visits to museums and the Houses of Parliament and visiting speakers, for example the local mayor. The extensive range of after-school activities, trips and visits and visitors promotes their personal development exceptionally well and ensures that everyone can find something to excel at. This, together with their involvement in choosing their next school, and good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, prepares them very well for the next stage of their education.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory overall. Staff know their pupils exceptionally well and work together to ensure the high levels of care on a daily basis. Relationships between pupils and staff are good, and pupils are supervised well. Pupils feel safe from bullying and have confidence that it will be dealt with constructively should it occur. Communication between home and school is excellent so that parents are aware of any concerns should they arise. Older pupils show care and concern for younger ones, reflecting the school's ethos to be 'nice to each other'. Pupils are encouraged to follow active and healthy lifestyles and they appreciate the benefits of exercise through their regular access to sporting activities.

Staff have undertaken child protection training in matters of safeguarding pupils' welfare. Recently written policies and procedures in relation to health and safety meet requirements. Risk assessments for all aspects of school life, including the regular use of nearby sports facilities, have now been completed. The school has acted rapidly to address issues raised in a recent external fire risk assessment, such

as improved new signage, fire procedures and guidance and records of regular fire drills and testing of fire equipment. Most staff are trained in first aid and first-aid boxes are kept freshly stocked. A clear behaviour and discipline policy is in place with accurate recording and analysis of entries and actions taken. The school maintains attendance registers correctly but an admissions register is not kept in accordance with requirements. The records to support the central register are not well collated to allow for easy checking and maintenance. Many of the policies and procedures are new and are only just beginning to be tried and refined.

The school complies with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school now meets the regulations for checking the suitability of staff to work with children and a single central record is now in place and kept up-to-date.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is housed in a large detached building which has been modernised and extended. All parts of the building are well decorated providing purposeful and safe learning environments. Displays, mostly of the pupils' work, brighten the corridors and most classrooms. Classrooms are suitably furnished but some are small and although adequate, are rather cramped for the few larger groups. There is an extensively used main hall, music practice rooms and a new theatre as well as specialist facilities for art and science. Local sports facilities are exclusively and routinely used to extend the provision for physical education and games. There are two outdoor play areas: the one for the younger pupils is very well equipped and the other is used by older pupils on a staggered basis. As at the last inspection, the school does not have appropriate facilities for pupils who are unwell.

Provision of information

The school provides parents and carers with an appropriate range of helpful information through its website and prospectus pack. This meets requirements and includes details or refers to the availability of the key policies. Information on the pupils' performance in Common Entrance examinations for the previous year is included. Parents are reasonably well informed of their child's progress in twice-yearly reports, as well as through meetings, regular telephone and e-mail contact. However, the quality of the reports is variable and they still lack detail on attainment in relation to age-related expectations and do not provide guidance to parents for the next steps of their son's learning. Good links with the local authority support pupils with special educational needs, to consider personal education plans and review statements, when required.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a clearly written complaints policy which meets requirements and sets out how formal and informal complaints can be made to the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness is good. The individual strengths and capabilities of each child are known by staff so they make good progress in a warm and welcoming environment. Leadership and management are good. Those in charge have a clear idea of how to improve and all relevant policies, procedures and risk assessments meet the requirements. Staff are well qualified and fully trained in safeguarding and first aid. Relationships at all levels are very good and communication with parents is very positive. Good use is made of the plentiful resources for indoor and outdoor learning. However, despite the recommendation in the last report, the location of the two classes remains on the first floor and does not enable the children to access easily the outdoor area outside of planned times.

The quality of provision is good with frequent opportunities for teacher-led and child-initiated learning. There are good opportunities for investigative experiences and for regular use of ICT. Assessment through observation is embedded. The information gained is used well to target the next steps; however, planning tends to identify what the children will do and not always what they will learn from the activities to be undertaken.

Children's outcomes are good with a high number attaining nearly all the early learning goals. They make particularly good progress in reading. The children are articulate, can think critically, solve problems and concentrate for a reasonable amount of time. They know how to keep safe and are aware of the need for good hygiene and physical activity to keep healthy.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that the admission register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with regulation 5 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(k)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Provide more opportunities for learning about the technological aspects of the curriculum by:
 - ensuring that the pupils, in particular those in Key Stage 3, have wider and more formal experience of the research, analysis, design and evaluation aspects of design and technology
 - developing the ICT programme of study and schemes of work so that the pupils are able to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills to a higher level as they move across the school.
- Develop marking processes to enable an ongoing conversation about learning to occur, so pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the quality of the twice-yearly reports to parents.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- improve the children's access to the outdoor environment
- identify clearly in the planning what the children will learn from the planned activities.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Preparatory		
Date school opened	1885		
Age range of pupils	4–13		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 240	Girls: 0	Total: 240
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 10,500		
Address of school	Worcester Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 7QQ		
Telephone number	020 89447020		
Email address	office@willingtonschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr J G Hill		
Proprietor	Willington School Foundation Ltd		