

Sinclair House School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett

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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}

The inspection of registered provision was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

Sinclair House School is an independent Montessori co-educational day school for pupils aged between two and nine years of age, situated in Fulham in West London. It is accommodated in two terraced houses on opposite sides of Munster Road. Admission is non-selective. At the time of the inspection there were 96 pupils on roll. Twenty-three children under three are educated in a separately registered childcare provision. Forty-three children are in receipt of Early Years Foundation Stage grants. The school was registered in 1989 as a Roman Catholic school and, although it keeps this affiliation, it accepts pupils from a wider range of faiths. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a minority from other White backgrounds and a few from other minority ethnic groups. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school's aim is to 'establish a firm academic foundation and to nurture each child's progress and individuality'. The school was last inspected in November 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Sinclair House School provides a good education for its pupils and meets its aims; it has continued to improve since its last inspection and now meets all but two of the regulations. The curriculum and other activities meet the ability range and interests of the pupils well and they clearly enjoy their education. Pupils make good progress because of effective teaching and assessment, which meets the full range of pupils' abilities. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children attain high standards. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and their behaviour is outstanding. The school has robust arrangements for safeguarding pupils and provision for their welfare, health and safety is good.

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

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/ukpga_20060021_en_4#pt3-ch2-pb4-l1g49

Quality of education

The school has a good curriculum. It is supported effectively by detailed plans which follow the Montessori methodology. Planning is supported by reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and the National Curriculum. It clearly identifies what pupils will learn and these objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what they need to do to progress. There is good coverage of all the required aspects of learning with an appropriate emphasis on the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning; they comment on the good range of activities they are given, including sports, games and swimming. All pupils learn French and say they enjoy the subject. There are also several French-speaking pupils at the school following their own French curriculum, which meets English requirements. These pupils make good progress in their acquisition of English, as well as other aspects of their learning.

Teaching and assessment are good. Evidence from the sampling of pupils' work indicates that pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1. Nearly all pupils pass entrance examinations to local independent schools. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understand the Montessori methodology very well. Because teachers know their pupils well, there is a high degree of individualisation, with tasks that are closely matched to the abilities of all the pupils, enabling them to make good progress. Teaching assistants support teachers by providing effective help to small groups and individual children and pupils who have identified needs. Throughout the school there is a good balance between child-initiated and teacher-directed learning, which has a positive effect on pupils' independence and self-confidence. Effective use is made of resources and the outside areas. Teachers keep detailed records against National Curriculum attainment levels in Key Stage 1, as well as careful tracking of progress from Reception to Year 2. Assessment information is used effectively to inform reports to parents. Although there are detailed and useful records on children's performance and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the method of recording means they are not easy to use when monitoring a child's progress and the lack of baseline assessment on entry is equally unhelpful in this respect.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their social development is particularly strong and their behaviour is outstanding. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and their spiritual and moral development is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and attendance is excellent. Pupils get on well together and often support each other in class. For example, bilingual French-speaking pupils help to translate for new pupils who do not speak English. In many lessons, the level of enthusiasm is palpable, with pupils very keen to answer questions and show they understand what they are learning. Pupils' cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of the wider world through their studies of the globetrotting 'Leo the Lion', a fictional lion who is supposed to visit different countries around the world. The school has good links

with a school in Beijing, which also enhances pupils' cultural awareness. Pupils are well prepared for their future and several commented on how well the school had prepared them for entrance examinations. Pupils make a positive contribution to the life of the school and the local community. There are good links with the local Catholic Church and pupils have raised considerable sums for local, national and international charities. They have also been involved in the 'making Fulham Greener' project by planting seeds.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. The school cares well for its pupils, as seen in the attention given to promoting their well-being and enjoyment of school. Pupils are well supervised in school and on trips. There are no instances of bullying or other forms of harassment reported by pupils. Arrangements for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils, including staff training and risk assessment, meet requirements and their implementation is good. There is a comprehensive policy for child protection, which is implemented well. Good quality of care for pupils is seen in the high level of commitment of staff and their competence in promoting pupils' health and safety. Arrangements to promote good behaviour are very effective and result in a calm environment for learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles and to keep safe. The school works well with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure that pupils are secure. The school has made good progress on its action plan to replace the wiring in 159 Munster Road. It now has a fixed date for the work which is to be done shortly. The nature of the deficiencies is such that there is no immediate risk to pupils. However, since, at the time of the inspection, the work has not been completed, the school is not currently compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The school fulfils all its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has carried out all the requirements of the safeguarding legislation. There are appropriate checks on the suitability of the proprietor and staff to work with children. The single central record of staff checks is efficiently kept and notes all the required information.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school accommodation is well maintained and most is suitable for the education of the age range of pupils. However, some of the classrooms for pupils in Key Stage 1 located in 159 Munster Road are too small and it is difficult for teachers and pupils to move around. This inhibits the range of activities that can take place in these rooms. The school has compensated for this to some degree by moving the older pupils over to 196 Munster Road in the afternoon, where there is adequate space for physical activities, such as drama and karate. The outdoor provision at 196 Munster Road for the older children in the nursery is very good and provides an interesting and stimulating environment for these children. The outdoor space at 159 Munster Road is adequate, but is only readily accessible by children under three, not those in

Reception. However, the school compensates for this shortcoming by providing children in Reception with a good range of outdoor playground activities in the afternoons and times in the local park.

Provision of information

The school has an easily accessible website, which is used effectively to keep parents well informed about the school. It has all the school policies on it and is readily accessible. All information is clear, accurate and up to date. Reports to parents are informative and regular and provide detailed information about their children's performance and progress.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school fully meets the requirements for the handling of complaints and there have been none in the last academic year.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation phase is good. Provision is good and all requirements are met. Children under three are well catered for and their provision fully meets the requirements of the Early Years register. They settle in easily and clearly enjoy the level of independence and inclusion.

Children develop cooperative skills at an early age and respond well to the range of learning opportunities provided for them. Outcomes across all areas of learning at the end of this stage, confirmed by samples of work and children's responses, are outstanding and children are very well prepared for their entry to Year 1.

The school has worked hard to provide improved access to a 'free flow' style of indoor and outdoor learning for children under three and four-year-olds, using the two playgrounds, but this is not available to children in the Reception class during the morning. However, a good range of afternoon activities and access to the playground at this time addresses this issue.

The setting conducts careful, ongoing assessment which is used effectively. However, there is no formal baseline assessment, and assessment information is not recorded in a format that can be used easily to track the rates of progress of children through the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Leaders have drawn up suitable plans to further enhance provision and regular meetings ensure that all practitioners are kept well informed. Parents have two consultation opportunities during the year and receive a written report on their children's progress. Teachers organise an annual information event to explain the work done in the classroom and the objectives of the curriculum.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.⁵

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

- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by completing the rewiring of 159 Munster Road (paragraph 13).

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

- ensure that all teaching spaces are of an appropriate size to allow effective teaching to take place (paragraph 23(i)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve and refine procedures for assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children's progress can be tracked more easily, including the introduction of baseline assessment when children enter the school
- further improve the access of children in the Reception class to the outside learning environment.

⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made

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	Montessori		
Date school opened	1989		
Age range of pupils	2–9 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 23	Girls: 23	Total: 46
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 19	Girls: 31	Total: 50
Number of children aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 10	Girls: 13	Total: 23
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of looked after children	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,025–£9,105		
Annual fees (childcare)	£3,405–£5,475		
Address of school	159 & 196 Munster Road Fulham London SW6 6AU		
Telephone number	0207 736 9182		
Email address	Carlotta@sinclairehouseschool.co.uk		
Principal	Mrs Carlotta O’Sullivan		
Proprietor	Mrs Carlotta O’Sullivan		