

Chepstow House School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Elisabeth Linley 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

Chepstow House School is a pre-preparatory co-educational school for children aged from four to seven years of age. The school is located in a residential area of Bayswater, London and is part of the Alpha Plus Group. It was opened in January 2010 when Reception-aged children were admitted. There are now 63 children on roll, aged from four to six, who are in the Reception and Year 1 classes. From September 2011, the school will be operating with Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. All the children attend on a full-time basis and none are in receipt of government nursery funding. One child has a statement of special educational needs and just under one third of the children who attend speak English as an additional language; however, the vast majority are bilingual. The school aims to 'discover the best in every child and challenge them to go beyond their expectations'. This is the school's first inspection, following its registration in 2009.

Evaluation of the school

Chepstow House provides a good quality of education. Throughout the school, children make good progress. This is as a result of the good overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school's good curriculum and teaching. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. The arrangements for children's safeguarding are rigorous and underpin the school's provision for children's welfare, health and safety, which is good. In a relatively short time, the headteacher and staff have worked very well together to ensure that the school meets all of the regulations for independent schools and is successful in meeting its stated aims.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. In the Reception classes, the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is followed and National Curriculum subjects are taught in the rest of the school. Curriculum policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and commercially produced schemes are followed to aid the teaching and learning of

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

sounds and letters. The school places a strong emphasis on developing children's skills in reading, writing, mathematics and their creative development. French and music are taught by subject specialists and swimming lessons are provided during the summer term for Reception-aged children and during the autumn term for those in Year 1. Children have regular physical education lessons which include dance, gymnastics and sporting activities. Other subjects, such as science, geography and history, are delivered through topics which have strong cross-curricular links with mathematics, literacy, music and physical education. Information and communication technology (ICT) is an important part of the curriculum throughout the school. It is used extensively in all subjects and is enhanced by the available resources which include individual laptops, digital cameras and video recorders. Provision for personal, social and health education is also delivered well through the curriculum.

The curriculum is effectively enhanced by visits out of school; children in the Reception and Year 1 classes enjoy opportunities to go to the National Gallery, the London Aquarium, the Science Museum, Holland Park Ecological Centre, the Museum of Childhood and the local library. During the inspection, one of the Reception classes visited the local fishmongers, a visit that was carefully linked with their work in school. Children also benefit from visitors to school, such as an author, a cellist and an opera singer. Extra-curricular activities are provided in cookery, art, drama, science and chess, while individual music lessons are available during the school day.

Teaching and assessment are good. In Reception and Year 1, teachers work together well to ensure that lessons are supported effectively by medium- and long-term planning. Lessons are well planned to meet the children's different needs and the children benefit from the small classes. All staff use ICT very well to aid teaching and learning and the vast majority employ effective behaviour management strategies to promote pupils' good behaviour. Lessons have a good pace and children are encouraged to think for themselves and to work effectively as individuals, in pairs and in teams; this promotes their independence and aids the good progress that all groups of children make. Effective questioning, challenge and support are provided for pupils who have special educational needs, who speak English as an additional language or who are identified as gifted and talented. Children's individual needs are identified as early as possible after they start school and positive links are established with parents and carers, and with outside agencies, such as speech therapists. The school works well with parents, carers and others to meet the requirements of children's statements of special educational needs. One-to-one support is also provided by the headteacher and such strategies help all children to make good progress from their individual starting points.

The school's framework for assessment includes regular reading assessments and ongoing observational assessments in Reception. Internal tests in mathematics are completed at the end of each term in Year 1, while children's spelling is similarly assessed on a termly basis. The National Curriculum attainment levels are used to assess children's writing and in other subjects, while evaluations at the end of a topic are completed by the teachers and by the children who self-evaluate their learning.

Effective assessment strategies are used in the classroom, for example by setting targets with the children to aid their improvement and the children talking with others about their work in order to complete peer and self-assessments. However, the procedures for assessment are recently established and plans are in place to strengthen them throughout the school so that assessment data is analysed effectively in order to further support and track children's future learning and progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children attend regularly and are happy at school, a fact endorsed by parents and carers. They participate readily in activities and are confident to make decisions. They develop good ICT, communication, literacy and numeracy skills and are encouraged to think for themselves; this aids their independence and future education. Children throughout school enjoy being given responsibilities, for example in collecting the registers. They receive awards for being a good friend, offering a helping hand and for 'star of the week', which are celebrated in assembly. Through the curriculum, children learn to play and work together happily. Behaviour is good; however, during the inspection some older children did not behave as well as they might have done.

From an early age, children learn about others' needs. They support charity events, for example, Sport Relief and Save the Children, and this supports their growing understanding of how children live in different parts of the world as well as those who live locally. Children learn about public institutions and services in England through links with the fire services and police, who visit school regularly. The school was also visited by the local mayor and the children wrote to the council to say that a 'school' traffic sign was needed near to school; a sign has now been put up. Parents and carers share information with the children about their different cultures and faiths. The school's international day celebrates the different nationalities represented in school; this contributes well to the promotion of tolerance and harmony among groups with different cultural traditions.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of children, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good. Staff are trained in safeguarding, first aid and fire safety, as required. Risk assessments are implemented effectively for educational visits and fire safety. Evacuation procedures are undertaken on a regular basis. All health and safety checks are completed effectively, while daily checks are done of classrooms, communal areas and the playground. The children are mindful of safety in these areas and learn about keeping safe through, for example, road safety campaigns and safe-scooter training. The school promotes healthy eating very well. Healthy lunches and snacks are available and the children know the importance of eating healthily.

They also know that it is important to keep healthy through exercise and they very much enjoy their outside physical activities. Good hygiene rules and routines are also promoted well, which the children adopt. There are clear policies for the promotion of good behaviour and anti-bullying, and children are supervised well.

The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The appropriate checks for the appointment of staff have been completed and ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The checks are recorded in a single central register as required.

Premises and accommodation at the school

Suitable premises enable the children to work and play in a safe and secure environment. The school building and grounds are well maintained. There are two hall areas that are used for assemblies, art and children's creative and physical development activities. One hall area is also used at snack and lunch times. The building currently has a number of unoccupied rooms that are used for small group work or quiet activities; these will be used as classrooms as the school's numbers grow. There is an attractive outdoor area that is well used for children's outside learning and sporting activities.

Provision of information

All requirements are met. The school provides a broad range of information for parents and carers through newsletters, a prospectus and the school's website. The school also has a very effective means of communication to parents and carers via email, allowing them to send pictures and texts to relevant classes following activities.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

Procedures for handling complaints meet all the regulations.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children thoroughly enjoy school and parents and carers report that they are very happy with the school. Children make good progress and achieve good outcomes. For example, they communicate with each other and with adults confidently. They work well in small groups, or on their own, and are happy to choose their own activities. They

operate the laptop computers well and, during the inspection, showed dexterity in making an aquarium from card and producing the sea life to go in it. They were also able to use descriptive language to evaluate each other's demonstration of waves. The quality of provision is good. The staff know the children very well and ensure that planning is detailed to meet their different needs. The use of the outdoor area for learning is enhanced by the good use of resources and there are clear opportunities for teacher-led and child-initiated learning both indoors and out. Children know how to stay safe through teachers' reminders and visual prompts. There is an equally clear focus on health and hygiene and children have a number of opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as to tidy up or collect the post. The assessment of children's progress is regularly carried out and is mostly good, and the Early Years Foundation Stage profile is completed effectively. However, leaders recognise the need to record some assessments in more depth. Leadership and management are good. A rigorous approach is taken to safeguarding; welfare requirements are met and risk assessments for Reception are thorough. Effective partnerships are established with parents and carers, and with external agencies where support for children's needs is required.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- strengthen the procedures for tracking the progress that children make and the analysis of the assessment data collected.

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	Pre-preparatory		
Date school opened	6 January 2010		
Age range of pupils	4–7 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 38	Girls: 25	Total: 63
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)	£13,650		
Address of school	19 Pembridge Villas, London W11 3EP		
Telephone number	0207 243 0243		
Email address	info@chepstowhouseschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Angela Barr		
Proprietor	Alpha Plus Group		