

Eaton House School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Sue Frater 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

Eaton House School is a non-selective pre-preparatory boys' school located in the London Borough of Westminster. It is part of the Eaton House group of schools. The school is based in two adjoining regency buildings and opened in 1897. There are currently 239 boys on roll, aged four to eight years. While some of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, none has a statement of special educational needs. Their needs relate mainly to speech and language difficulty or dyslexia. The Kindergarten has currently 71 boys on roll who are four to five years old. None of the children receive government funding. The school aims to 'encourage individual areas of talent as well as instilling confidence, self-worth and respect for others'. The school was last inspected in September 2008 when all regulations were met.

Evaluation of the school

Eaton House School provides a good quality of education with many outstanding features. The curriculum, while good in the way that it meets the needs of all pupils, is exemplary in its breadth and balance and in its provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The good quality of teaching promotes pupils' good progress. Pupils' behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Safeguarding procedures and the welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and the school meets its aims and all the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and prepares pupils well for the seven plus and eight plus common entrance examinations to highly regarded preparatory schools. It is exemplary in its breadth and balance. The curriculum includes comprehension, composition, grammar, spelling, handwriting, formal and practical arithmetic, reasoning, science, computers, art and design, geography, history, scripture, French, physical education, games, swimming, chess, drama, music and personal, social and health education. In the Kindergarten classes, the curriculum also includes phonics and incorporates, effectively, the Early Years Foundation Stage six areas of learning.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Curriculum planning is monitored by subject leaders who ensure it provides for progression within and across year groups. For example, they have identified the need to give more emphasis to the correct formation of letters in the Kindergarten and Year 1 to support pupils in joining their handwriting in Year 2. Weekly plans suitably identify the learning needs of different ability groups. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding. Effective assessment and screening procedures identify the specific needs of each pupil. The special educational needs coordinator ensures appropriate intervention is matched to the pupil's needs. This includes the use of a wide range of external specialists, such as speech and language therapists, in addition to the deployment of teaching assistants in lessons. As a result, the pupils make very good progress.

The curriculum is enhanced by an extensive range of after-school clubs which are enjoyed by the large majority of pupils. The clubs include sport, including football, and opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument. The curriculum is also enhanced by educational visits, for example to London Zoo and the Science Museum, and by visiting speakers, often parents, who talk about their professions. Personal, social and health education promotes aspects of citizenship, for example knowing right from wrong, understanding rules, and challenging racism and bullying. It develops successfully pupils' understanding of how to keep safe and healthy.

In the large majority of lessons, the quality of teaching is good and promotes pupils' good progress. Teaching in music is particularly effective in enabling pupils to reach a high standard of attainment. Typical features of teaching are secure subject knowledge, well-planned lessons, good use of resources including interactive whiteboards to demonstrate required skills, and high expectations of the level and amount of work pupils can produce. Positive relationships encourage pupils to participate confidently in the lesson. In the most successful lessons, teachers ask probing questions to challenge and extend pupils' thinking. Pupils say they enjoy practical activities such as science investigations, using computers and sport. In these subjects they think and learn independently.

Detailed assessments, including in mathematics, and of reading and spelling ages, are carried out each term. While teachers are beginning to use the assessments to match lessons to the range of abilities, there is still a tendency in some lessons for all pupils to be given the same task. This does not promote exceptionally good progress consistently, particularly for less- and more-able pupils who sometimes find the work too easy or too difficult. On occasions this leads to restlessness, although most teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Teachers' marking of pupils' work includes encouraging comments, but does not always identify specifically how pupils can improve their performance.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most pupils enjoy school very much, as evident in their completed questionnaires, their regular attendance and in their very positive attitudes to learning. They have high

aspirations and develop effective skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology to support their future learning. Pupils, including the senior choir, perform confidently in assemblies and in concerts for the community, for example in Cadogan Hall. Such activities contribute well to their self-esteem and self-confidence, and help to develop their social skills.

The many opportunities for reflection provided in assemblies, lessons and events such as the Kindergarten's Nativity play, enhance pupils' spiritual development. Pupils contribute enthusiastically to fundraising events for local charities, for instance The Royal Marsden and Great Ormond Street hospitals. This, together with activities such as debating current affairs, provides them with a moral code. Pupils are eager to develop leadership skills and to support the school, for example as monitors, head and deputy head boys. They develop an understanding of public institutions and services in England through visits, for instance to the Houses of Parliament and local police and fire stations. Their understanding of different cultures and appreciation of cultural diversity are developed through studying music from different cultures and events such as an International Day. The school is aware of the need to develop this aspect of its work further.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils respond positively to reminders from staff to improve their behaviour further. They also respond well to teachers' high expectations of their self-reliance. Pupils enjoy strong friendships and support each other exceptionally well. They know the difference between right and wrong, show empathy for others and they are well mannered. However, low-level interruptions sometimes break the flow of lessons.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. This is confirmed by almost all of the questionnaires completed by pupils and their parents and carers. Pupils say also that bullying incidents are rare. They are confident that staff would address any concerns that they might have. All the required policies and procedures for safeguarding children are established well, including those relating to child protection. They are organised very efficiently electronically and are monitored regularly. Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They are supported effectively by a range of training and induction, including for child protection. Training and procedures for safer recruitment and first aid also meet requirements. Staff training is recorded electronically and updated regularly.

Health and safety policies and procedures, including pupil supervision, and fire and other risk assessments in school and on trips, are implemented appropriately. They are reviewed systematically and improved where necessary. Pupils are very aware of the importance of keeping safe and healthy. The school promotes healthy eating through a well-planned lunch menu. It is aware of the need to review the snacks pupils bring into school. Pupils participate eagerly in physical exercise in the hall and in games lessons and after-school clubs in the local park. Attendance and admissions

registers are maintained appropriately and the school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All the required checks on the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors to work with children have been carried out. They are contained in a single central register which is organised very well. It also records staff training, for example in child protection and first aid. It is monitored regularly to ensure that the training is up to date.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The accommodation is suitable and sufficient to provide the full curriculum. It includes classrooms, a hall, a dining hall, specialist rooms for science and computers, and music practice rooms. The accommodation is secure, clean and well maintained. Inviting displays of pupils' work create a positive learning environment. While there is no outdoor space, the school makes good use of a local park for sport and recreation. Coaches are used to transport the pupils to the park and pupils are supervised appropriately.

Provision of information

All the required information is provided or made available to parents, carers and others. This includes a regularly updated prospectus, an accurate and very informative website which details how to access all relevant policies, annual magazines, regular news bulletins and weekly newsletters. Parents and carers say they feel well informed about their children's progress through twice yearly parents' and carers' evenings and reports each term. They say also that teachers are very approachable, including through email. School reports detail achievement in each subject. Some, although not all, subject reports indicate how the child's performance can be improved further.

Most of the questionnaires completed by parents and carers indicated that they were very happy with the school. Comments include, 'My child has made superb progress. I am overjoyed by his reading skills and enthusiasm. They (his teachers) have also nurtured his confidence and taught politeness.'

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints policy meets all the regulations.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress in all areas of learning, and achieve good outcomes in academic and personal development. They grow into enthusiastic and keen learners. They are confident and develop good communication skills. The teaching of phonics is good

and by the start of Year 1 children are attaining above the national expectations for their age in both reading and writing. The school's inclusive ethos ensures that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those from different ethnic minority groups, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, make similarly good progress to their peers.

Provision for children is good. They are very well cared for and enjoy good relationships with adults and other children. Their personal development is good and they work together amicably, sharing equipment and ideas during paired discussions. Detailed assessments of children's attainment are kept in all areas of learning. However, on occasion, teaching is based on giving the same work to the whole class. As a result, more-able children are not consistently given work at a higher level to ensure that they make the best possible progress. In addition, teaching is sometimes over-directed and opportunities to develop children's independent learning skills are missed.

There is no outdoor area because of building constraints. However, the school makes good use of the local park to provide the full curriculum. Staff are deployed well and are involved fully with the children at all times. Parents and carers are given good information on how to become partners in their children's learning. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, Kindergarten leader and Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator, provide effective support for staff through monitoring lessons and by examining teachers' planning and assessments.

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.

- Secure exceptionally good progress for all pupils by:
 - matching tasks more closely to their differing needs, particularly the needs of more-able pupils
 - informing pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage:
 - improve children's independent learning skills through a better balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities

- make better use of the assessments to plan for different ability groups, particularly for more-able children.

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	1897		
Age range of pupils	4–8 years		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 239	Girls: 0	Total: 239
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,405		
Address of school	3–5 Eaton Gate Eaton Square London SW1W 9BA		
Telephone number	0207 730 9343		
Email address	lwatts@eatonhouseschools.com		
Headteacher	Ms L Watts		
Proprietor	Mrs D B Harper		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eaton House School, London SW1W 9BA

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your school. It was a pleasure to see you at work and to talk with so many of you. The inspectors particularly enjoyed the way you sang so enthusiastically in assembly.

We found that your school provides you with a good quality of education and that it has many outstanding features. The good curriculum prepares you well for the seven plus and eight plus examinations for your next schools. From the Kindergarten right through to Year 3, you study a lot of interesting subjects and enjoy many after-school clubs. This is outstanding. Some of you have excellent special help. Good teaching helps you all to make good progress. Your behaviour is good and you have good manners. You show good understanding of other people, know what is right and what is wrong, and you work and play very well together. You help others, and you are beginning to learn about people in different parts of the world. Your school takes excellent care of you. Your teachers give your parents and carers excellent information about your work and progress. To help you make even better progress, we have suggested that your teachers should:

- make sure that your lessons are not too easy or too hard
- tell you what you need to do to improve your work
- help children in the Kindergarten to think and learn for themselves.

You can help by telling your teacher if the work is too easy or too hard. You told the inspectors that you enjoy school very much. We hope you continue to enjoy your learning and we wish you success in your next school.

Yours sincerely
Sue Frater
Her Majesty's Inspector