

St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton

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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

St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School is an independent day school for pupils aged from three to eleven years. There are 80 pupils on roll aged from three to eight years, including 48 in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are 14 children who attend part time and all receive government nursery funding. There are 28 pupils who speak English as an additional language. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school was founded in 1982 and is held in part of St John's Wood Church, a Grade 2 listed building close to Lord's Cricket Ground and Regent's Park in north London. The school's aims are, 'to guide and support each individual in exploring their potential in an exciting nurturing and safe environment'. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in May 2008.

Evaluation of the school

St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School continues to provide a good quality of education and effectively meets its aims. Through a good and varied curriculum and good teaching, pupils make good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour are outstanding. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is also outstanding. All requirements regarding safeguarding are met effectively. The school has successfully addressed a regulatory failure from the previous inspection; it now meets all except one of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and focuses well on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Provision covers all of the required areas of learning and ensures that pupils are prepared effectively for the next stage of their education. Schemes of work exist for all subjects and appropriate work is planned. This ensures a clear progression in learning across the key stages. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and it develops children's creativity and independence very effectively. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of all pupils, including those who may need additional help with their learning and those

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

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

who are learning English as an additional language. French, music, art, drama and physical education are taught by specialists. Year 2 pupils learn the recorder and all pupils have the opportunity to learn another musical instrument. The provision for personal, social and health education is well documented; it is firmly rooted in the school's ethos and successfully develops pupils' personal qualities. Although pupils have opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) in some lessons, there are no discrete lessons on the timetable. The school is aware that it needs to increase its ICT resources and to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills. A range of clubs such as chess, yoga, art, music, football and ballet take place both during and after school. A range of activities and visits to local museums, theatres and art galleries further enriches the curriculum and effectively broadens pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world at large.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in classrooms and staff foster effectively the pupils' enjoyment of school and their positive attitudes towards learning. The small classes ensure that the teachers come to know each pupil very well and this allows them to provide very good support for individuals in need of extra help and guidance. As a result, the pupils feel comfortable and behave extremely well in lessons. Most pupils respond very positively to instructions, are eager to answer questions, concentrate well and are keen to complete their allotted tasks. Following the last inspection, the school was asked to share good practice in teaching and learning, and staff now have opportunities to observe each other and staff in other schools. Resources for learning and teaching are good overall and are used effectively in lessons.

Teaching strengths include effective questioning, with different pupils being invited to reply, the provision of clear instructions, good explanations and the maintenance of a brisk pace during the lesson. Staff have high expectations and suitably challenge the pupils, including the more able. They ensure work set matches pupils' differing needs, and those who need additional help are well supported. Praise and encouragement are used well to motivate and encourage pupils to learn. Pupils of all abilities make good progress, especially in the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make particularly good progress. Older pupils are very thoroughly prepared for entrance tests to different London schools and most gain places at the schools of their choice.

Assessment procedures are effective and assessment information is used well to inform lesson planning. Lessons are built well around previous learning, as seen, for example, in a numeracy lesson in Year 1 when pupils estimated, then compared, the weights of different objects using standard measures and, on the following day, used non-standard measures.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour and the personal development of children in the Early Years

Foundation Stage are also outstanding. This very friendly school is welcoming to both pupils and their parents and carers. Some parents and carers whose children speak English as an additional language commented on how they had been made to feel welcome in the school. The school makes good use of the local church for regular events such as harvest and Christmas celebrations. They are currently busily enjoying rehearsing their nativity play. Such activities have a very positive impact on pupils' spiritual development.

Older pupils act as prefects and take their caring role in looking after the younger pupils seriously. Pupils show a very clear understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour is exemplary, both in class and in moving around the building. They are very enthusiastic about their school and say that they really enjoy being there, as demonstrated by their regular attendance. They made comments such as, 'I like school... we have fun'. Pupils very much enjoy working and playing in the happy, well-organised and friendly environment. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community and are well known locally. They very regularly fundraise for charities such as Barnardo's.

Pupils' cultural development is fostered very well through a wide range of activities, such as International Day, so they develop a very good appreciation of their own and other cultures. Racial harmony is very effectively promoted and pupils are very caring and tolerant towards each other. They develop a good understanding of public services and institutions in England through their topic work and through well-chosen visits outside the school and visitors to the school. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education having acquired a good range of academic and personal skills.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school has devised, and has effectively implemented, the full range of required policies and procedures, including for safeguarding, which pay due regard to national guidance. These include policies for anti-bullying, health and safety, including for visits outside school and behaviour. The designated person responsible for child protection is trained appropriately in both safeguarding and safer recruitment. All staff are trained in child protection, at the required level. The school risk-assesses all activities and is vigilant in checking on safety on the school site and play areas. Most staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid for the youngest children, and accidents are carefully recorded.

Pupils are encouraged to follow very healthy lifestyles. At break time, they have fruit and milk, and pupils tuck in very enthusiastically to the nutritious, well-balanced lunches, where good manners are encouraged. Regular exercise, including weekly swimming at a local pool, encourages them to stay fit and healthy. Precautions for fire prevention are thorough and all fire appliances are checked annually, with fire drills undertaken regularly, and they are formally recorded. The pupils are very well

supervised at all times. The admission and attendance registers meet regulatory requirements. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and has devised a three-year accessibility plan.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Procedures for checking the suitability of all staff and others are robust, and meet all requirements. The required single central record of such checks also meets requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation create a pleasant environment which assists pupils to learn safely and effectively. The building is in good decorative order and is well maintained. Teachers make good use of the accommodation and bright displays of pupils' work enhance it. The outdoor play area is suitable and put to optimum use. The school does not have facilities for pupils who are ill which meet the regulations.

Provision of information

The school provides, or makes available, to parents and others all of the required information. Parents and carers receive clear, accurate and an up-to-date range of information via the school's website, parent information folders and newsletters. Parents and carers are given an annual report and they have the opportunity of meeting staff on three formal occasions during the year. Additional meetings can be arranged if necessary. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were extremely positive and felt that their children were well cared for, enjoyed school and made good progress. Many made comments such as: 'We are over the moon, our son is developing both his academic and personal skills... a wonderful school, warm, kind and challenging... I am really impressed in how the school deals with children who do not speak English when they arrive.'

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Due to lively and energetic teaching, children make rapid progress in all areas of learning. Outcomes for children are outstanding, with almost all children working well beyond the early learning goals before the end of the Reception Year. The provision for children is outstanding. Teachers plan challenging activities and there are effective systems to assess children's progress. Children's behaviour is very good and they respond well to the high expectations that adults have of them. They enjoy learning

and are fully engaged in the wide range of activities, including learning French. There are very many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. They learn to read and spell through rigorous teaching of letters and sounds, and there is regular consolidation of learning so that things are not forgotten. Children learn to interact well with each other and the excellent relationships contribute strongly to the enjoyable and purposeful environment.

There is a very good balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to develop their creativity and independence in choosing their own activities. Outdoor learning is effective. It complements and enhances the indoor provision. There is very strong support for pupils who are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language, so that their specific needs are met. There are robust systems in place to ensure that children's welfare is effectively supported. They are learning how to stay healthy and safe. All staff are appropriately qualified and there are more staff than is required to meet ratio requirements. Leadership and management are outstanding and staff are committed to continual improvement. Partnerships with parents and carers are strong and safeguarding arrangements are robust.

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.³

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

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to use ICT to further develop their computer skills.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/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	Pre-preparatory school		
Date school opened	1982		
Age range of pupils	3–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 48	Girls: 18	Total: 66
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 8	Total: 14
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)	£6,450–£12,600		
Address of school	Lord's Roundabout St John's Hall London NW8 7NE		
Telephone number	020 7722 7149		
Email address	info@sjwpre-prep.org.uk		
Headteacher	Dimitra Louskas		
Proprietor	Adrian Ellis		

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.



24 November 2011

Inspection of St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School, London, NW8 7NE

Dear Children

Thank you for talking to us and for being so friendly when we visited your school. I know your mums and dads think the school is good, and the inspectors agree. This is what the inspectors liked most.

- Everybody works hard to ensure you enjoy yourselves and that you get a good education. I can see why your parents and carers are so pleased with the school.
- Your behaviour is outstanding both inside and outside the classroom. All the adults and the children get on so well together and you have a lot of fun.
- All grown-ups help you learn as much as you can and you are making good progress.
- We were pleased that you worked so hard in your reading, writing and mathematics, and that you were trying to improve.

We have asked the teachers to do something to make the school even better.

- We have asked your school to provide you with more opportunities to use computers.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Jill Bainton
Lead inspector