

Hall School Wimbledon

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

Hall School Wimbledon is a coeducational non-selective day school for pupils aged four to 16 years. Currently, there are 462 pupils on roll. This includes 32 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, none of whom are funded under the government scheme. The school takes pupils from Wimbledon and the neighbouring areas. There are five pupils with statements of special educational needs and no children are looked after. A small number of pupils on the autistic spectrum are in a specialist unit in the junior school but this unit is to be closed at the end of this academic year. There is a rich diversity of cultures in the school and a small number of pupils speak English as a second language.

The school was founded in 1990 and is housed on two sites. The junior school (Reception to Year 6) is accommodated in Putney Vale and the senior school (Years 7 to 11) occupies The Downs in Wimbledon. The school prepares pupils for entrance to independent schools at ages 7, 8, 11 and 13. Most pupils remain at the school to take GCSE examinations.

The mission statement, the 'Spirit of the School', contains a commitment 'to produce the very highest standard of education' and 'to ensure that our children are happy, secure and fulfilled'. The school was last inspected in June 2009, when it met all but three of the regulations.

Evaluation of the school

Hall School Wimbledon provides an outstanding quality of education and meets its aims very effectively. The pupils confirm that they are very happy at school and enjoy the wide range of opportunities available to them. All regulatory requirements are met, which is an improvement from the last inspection. Pupils make outstanding progress because of the outstanding teaching and assessment supported by an outstanding curriculum. Provision for the welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding arrangements, is good. Strengths throughout the school include the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and behaviour.

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

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

Quality of education

The quality of education is outstanding. The outstanding curriculum has been improved since the last inspection and is effectively meeting the learning needs of all the pupils. It is directly relevant to their needs and enables them to make exceptionally good progress, particularly in their basic skills.

The curriculum is supported very well by written documentation that provides for progression and continuity across the junior and senior schools. Those pupils who need additional help, including the small number on the autistic spectrum with statements of special educational needs, are very well supported, as are those who have English as an additional language.

In the junior school, pupils study the Common Entrance syllabus for independent schools combined with National Curriculum subjects. Information and communication technology (ICT) is introduced when the pupils move into Year 7. ICT is not introduced earlier as the school takes the view that younger pupils should consolidate their learning thoroughly using traditional methods before beginning to use ICT as a learning tool. Pupils have many opportunities for other technological exploration, including art and design technology. Provision is enhanced by the increased use of specialist teaching as the pupils move up through the junior school. Where relevant, pupils are given additional preparation for a range of entrance examinations to London day schools.

The school has updated its Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum effectively to meet recent changes in the statutory curriculum. Children in the Reception class now have regular well-planned learning activities in the newly created attractive outdoor learning environment. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

In the senior school, pupils study the full range of National Curriculum subjects and religious studies to GCSE and some subjects to IGCSE. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is taught appropriately as part of other subjects and is thoroughly embedded in the life of the school. The school has rightly identified that it needs to extend the use of ICT as a teaching resource for older pupils.

An exceptional range of extra-curricular activities, off-site visits, residential trips and visiting speakers to the school enhances the curriculum. The landscaped school grounds and adjacent Wimbledon Common are used very effectively for outdoor exploration and physical activities. A wide range of activities take place within the school day, including choirs, sports and drama. All pupils from Year 4 onwards have the opportunity for an annual residential visit with tours abroad for choir and sports groups. This wider curriculum, together with the well-planned programme within the school, helps the pupils to become well-rounded individuals who are confident and knowledgeable, ready to face the next stage in their school life.

Older pupils are very well prepared for leaving school with well-judged advice and support. Senior school pupils go on to sixth forms, and the school now provides

formal careers guidance to help them in selecting appropriate pathways to follow, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

Teaching and assessment are outstanding and, as a result, pupils make outstanding progress. Teachers are very well informed and prepare their lessons thoroughly, based on a secure knowledge of both Common Entrance and public examinations. Pupils use a wide range of plentiful resources to enhance their learning. There is a warm, friendly atmosphere in lessons, characterised by the very positive relationships between staff and the pupils and between the pupils themselves. These relationships help pupils to become confident learners.

Older pupils commented that the school is like a big family, where everyone knows one another very well and staff are always ready to help. The pupils settle quickly in lessons and are confident to ask for help when they need it. Staff use probing and incisive questions to check and extend the pupils' understanding and give them a variety of interesting, stimulating and challenging tasks, based on accurate assessment of their learning needs. This was evident in a senior school English lesson where pupils analysed advertisements, judging the target audience and, through discussion, showed how articulate and confident they were in expressing their well-formed opinions. Lessons move at a very brisk pace, with the clear learning objectives revisited and evaluated at regular intervals to ensure that all pupils learn as well as they can.

Pupils are regularly tested using both internal tests and those that are standardised nationally. Teachers use the information well to inform their teaching, adjusting to the different needs of all pupils, including those with special educational and language needs. An excellent feature in lessons is the opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own learning, for example in music, where the pupils helped to raise the quality of their singing performance after hearing themselves recorded. The pupils' books are well marked, with clear and specific guidance on how to further improve their work.

In the junior school the phonics teaching is outstanding and, as a result, the pupils become confident readers from an early stage.

Homework is regarded as a valuable part of the pupils' learning. The system is known as 'Flints' and works very effectively. From Year 3, the pupils have a structured framework for their homework each week, their results are monitored carefully and the information is shared very regularly with parents.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including those with learning difficulties, make outstanding progress according to their starting points. The thorough assessment procedures, utilised across the school, are effective and parents are kept very well informed through detailed reports, homework procedures and regular meetings with staff. In the Reception class, children's progress in the revised areas of learning are recorded securely and used in an effective manner to plan further activities to both excite and challenge the children.

The last report recommended that the school implemented a consistent approach to raising the quality of teaching, which the school has addressed.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. This is a very happy and welcoming community where all, both staff and pupils, feel valued. Pupils are very polite and helpful, and chat maturely and respectfully to visitors. Pupils of all age groups on each site mix very well together at recreation and lunchtimes. They are adamant that there is no bullying and that there is always a member of staff they can turn to if they need help. Older pupils are given informal posts of responsibility, such as manning the front desk and welcoming visitors before school begins formally. Their attendance is excellent and their behaviour outstanding. Pupils up to Year 9 have religious education lessons and learn about world religions, and younger pupils have recently visited the local synagogue. During the inspection, the younger pupils were practising enthusiastically for their Christmas performance, which includes a nativity play and carol singing, and the senior school choir were also preparing for their carol service. The pupils are involved in many local community activities and regular charitable fundraising events. The younger pupils excitedly recalled the Golden Jubilee celebrations, including a traditional British outdoor lunch and the visit of the London Mayor to open a new part of the school. The senior school runs a very effective personal tutor system for Years 10 and 11, where members of staff take care of up to ten students and support them through their GCSEs. There is a diversity of cultures at the school and racial harmony is very effectively promoted.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good. The school has devised and effectively implemented an extensive range of policies which pay due regard to national guidance. These include those for anti-bullying, health and safety, including visits outside school, behaviour and safeguarding. The designated person responsible for child protection is trained appropriately in both safeguarding and safer recruitment. All other staff are also trained in safeguarding, and a detailed policy fully meets requirements. There are detailed risk assessments that are undertaken for both activities on and off site. A large number of staff are fully trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid, and accidents are carefully recorded. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to live safe and healthy lifestyles. They eat healthy, wholesome meals at school and exercise regularly through their participation in the wide range of sport on offer. Precautions for fire prevention are thorough, with a risk assessment undertaken, all fire appliances being checked annually and fire drills undertaken regularly and recorded. The pupils are well supervised at all times and staffing ratios are high. The admission and attendance registers meet the regulations.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has carried out all of the required checks on all staff and others to confirm their suitability to work with children. The single central record contains all of the necessary information.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation on both sites create a very pleasant environment and assist the pupils to learn safely and effectively. All classrooms and other learning areas are conducive to the pupils' learning, with many rooms enhanced by professional artwork. Since the last inspection, the Reception classes have moved to ground floor level, enabling the children to access the outdoor environment. The school grounds are used very effectively. The medical facilities on both sites now meet requirements. Both the junior and senior schools make good use of local sports clubs and playing fields.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or made available, to parents, carers and others its website and documentation. Parents receive a detailed written report on their children's progress each year and are kept very well informed. Parents who responded via the online questionnaire expressed a very high degree of satisfaction with the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure meets regulatory regulations.

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 point for development.

- Extend the use of ICT in the senior school as a teaching resource.

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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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Coeducational independent day school		
Date school opened	1990		
Age range of pupils	4–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 323	Girls: 139	Total: 462
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 4	Girls: 1	Total: 5
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,999 to £13,224		
Address of school	The Senior School, 17 The Downs, Wimbledon, London SW20 8HF The Junior School, Stroud Crescent, Putney Vale, London SW15 3EQ		
Telephone number	0208 7882370		
Email address	principal@hsw.co.uk		
Headteacher	Timothy Hobbs		
Proprietor	Timothy Hobbs		

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.



23 November 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hall School Wimbledon, London SW20 7HF

We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about your work and life at school. Thank you for your friendly welcome and for being so polite and helpful. We judged the Hall School to be an outstanding school and that it meets all government requirements. We found that you:

- enjoy your school
- learn a great deal because of outstanding teaching
- show excellent behaviour, attend very regularly and all get on well together
- have lessons that are interesting, challenging and help you to improve your work.

We particularly enjoyed speaking to many of you and were impressed by your growing confidence which is preparing you well for your life in the future. We very much enjoyed the music and other creative work that we saw during our time in school.

Although your school is outstanding, your teachers are still keen to do even better. One way we have asked them to do this is by increasing the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the senior school.

I am sure that you will all continue to enjoy your learning at Hall School Wimbledon in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bainton
Lead inspector