

# Connaught House School

47 Connaught Square, London, W2 2HL

## Inspection dates

5–7 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- Teaching is good and promotes pupils' good achievement. Teachers know pupils well and ensure that lessons are enjoyable. Pupils feel safe and are happy and content in school.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally courteous, polite and supportive of each other.
- The curriculum is good and has some significant strengths, particularly in the broad range of before- and after-school clubs.
- The school is well led and managed. Pupils have achieved well in recent years because leaders have ensured that teaching is good and that their needs have been met.
- The school operates in an atmosphere of care, calm and warmth. Pupils, parents and carers frequently refer to the 'strong family atmosphere'.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Pupils do not achieve the same very high standards in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Written feedback is not always good enough to help pupils improve their work.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' learning in lessons as often as they could do and, occasionally, miss opportunities to provide further support or challenge to pupils.
- Leaders do not set clear targets to help teachers to improve their practice to the level of the best.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by 12 different teachers, looked at pupils' workbooks, and held meetings with senior leaders. They also met with two groups of pupils and listened to them read.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of pupils' attainment, and school improvement plans. They checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed by 19 parents and carers on Parent View and eight staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Jeremy Spencer, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jill Bainton

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Connaught House School was established in 1953 and the school has been on its present site on the corner of Connaught Square, near Hyde Park in London, since 1956. The school is based in a Grade II Georgian town house with classrooms on five storeys.
- The school admits children between the ages of four and 11. The number of pupils on roll has risen since the last inspection from 67 to 87. The school was last inspected in November 2009.
- Pupils are prepared for a range of entrance examinations, including Common Entrance and the 11+. Boys go on to other preparatory schools at the age of eight and girls mainly move to independent schools at the age of 11.
- Just over a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language and a broad range of ethnic heritages are represented at the school.
- There are very few disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school uses no additional provision.
- The school aims to 'create a happy environment which fosters cheerful, motivated and interested children who not only have confidence in their own abilities, but also a considerate awareness of their peers'.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement to outstanding by ensuring that pupils achieve the same very high standards in writing as they do in reading and mathematics by:
  - improving the effectiveness of the school's strategies to teach spellings
  - encouraging pupils, particularly those in the lower school, to write at length more frequently to practise their skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching and leadership and management to outstanding so that pupils make exceptional progress by:
  - ensuring that all teachers check pupils' learning and progress consistently well in lessons, so that work can be better adjusted to meet each pupil's needs
  - making better use of marking to inform pupils about the next steps they need to take in learning
  - ensuring that leaders identify clear development targets for each teacher to help them improve their practice.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. They are learning letters and sounds and are making good progress in reading. They are forming their letters well. Their mathematical development is good using many practical applications to help their learning, for example using simple clocks to aid their understanding of recording the hours.

Good teaching ensures that the vast majority of older pupils of all backgrounds, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, continue to make good progress as they move through the school. In all classes pupils read widely and enjoy a range of texts. By the time they reach the oldest class, most pupils are accomplished readers and standards compare favourably with national expectations. Pupils demonstrate excellent speaking and listening skills. They are highly articulate and use ambitious vocabulary in class discussions. However, the standard of pupils' writing is less strong. This is because pupils' spelling skills, although at least age appropriate, are not as well developed as their mathematics skills or their reading ability. In addition, lower school pupils do not write at length frequently enough to practise their skills. Pupils are confident and able mathematicians. The school's recent focus on developing pupils' skills in mental calculation has been successful. Pupils solve oral problems with speed and accuracy.

Many pupils have been successful in gaining entry to the school of their choice in recent years, including in securing scholarships. Pupils' art and design work, exhibited throughout the school, shows high levels of skills and creativity.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Outstanding**

The behaviour and personal development of pupils are outstanding. There is a very friendly, welcoming atmosphere in this family school where all the pupils are very well known and cared for by the staff. Pupils confirm that they enjoy school, making remarks such as, 'It's fun here.' This is reflected in their high attendance and excellent behaviour in class. The older pupils are encouraged to take initiative, have tasks to do around the school and help the younger ones, for example in making soft toys. The pupils understand school rules and move around the building with care. They are adamant that there is no bullying and have a very well developed understanding of what constitutes bullying. Older pupils have a very good understanding of the risks involved with using new technologies and the internet.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. They have many opportunities to experience the beauty of the world around them through the varied off-site visits to galleries and museums and the use of nearby Hyde Park. Regular assemblies and the planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme enhance spiritual awareness. Pupils have the opportunity for reflection during yoga which they thoroughly enjoy. They are given an introduction to public services and institutions in England, including the values of democracy and the rule of law, through the curriculum and planned visits. Both pupils and staff come from different backgrounds, and this helps to promote pupils' cultural awareness. Racial harmony is promoted effectively.

The school places a strong emphasis on supporting the growth of pupils' self-confidence and is successful in doing so. The impact of the school's work was demonstrated on several occasions during the inspection. For example, many pupils confidently recited both their own poems and those of others in preparation for a poetry performance for parents. A class of older pupils also played challenging pieces of music, written by the composer Vivaldi, and sang with great confidence and ability.

**Quality of teaching****Good**

The quality of teaching, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good overall and this promotes pupils' good achievement over time, as evidenced in pupils' work. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are taught well, and make equally good progress.

Teachers create a positive climate for learning and pupils respond to this by engaging enthusiastically in activities, and behaving very well. Teachers plan lessons appropriately, taking full account of the range of pupils' ability. Although pupil numbers have increased since the last inspection, small classes have been maintained, and this enables teachers to get to know pupils well and build up strong, positive and supportive relationships. Teachers, and teaching assistants, question pupils skilfully in class discussions to develop and extend their thinking, and ensure that all pupils take part in making a contribution.

While most of the teaching is good, a small proportion of outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection. During these lessons, teachers ensured that pupils made exceptional progress. For example, Year 5 pupils made exceptional progress in a mathematics lesson when learning about the concept and language of probability. The teacher very skilfully built up their understanding through discussion and then through the organisation of a broad range of practical activities using coins and dice.

A very small proportion of teaching that was no better than adequate was also observed during the inspection. When this was the case, pupils made some progress, but the pace of learning was slower because activities lacked focus and excitement. In these rare lessons where teaching is weaker, teachers do not always check pupils' work as thoroughly, or as frequently, as they could do. This means that a very few pupils, who find the work too easy, are not identified swiftly enough and further challenged to enable them to make outstanding progress.

Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and often write encouraging comments to reward pupils for their efforts. However, on a few occasions, teachers' written comments are not helpful in outlining the next steps of learning that pupils need to take to improve. When teachers do write helpful comments, occasionally, they are not always addressed by pupils or followed up by teachers.

**Quality of curriculum****Good**

The curriculum is good overall, with some significant strengths, particularly in the broad range of extra-curricular clubs offered to pupils. During the inspection, pupils were observed taking part in and enjoying embroidery, drama and pottery clubs, amongst others. Music is also a strength of the school. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument during their time at the school and the expectations of their performances in musical and choral activities are very high.

Suitable curriculum plans are in place for all subjects and all year groups and they are well matched to the needs of all groups of pupils. Frequent trips and visits and visitors to the school, including Olympic medal winners, support pupils in becoming well-rounded individuals. However, pupils, particularly those in the lower school, do not always have frequent opportunities to practise writing at length to reinforce their writing skills. Furthermore, systems to teach spellings are not as well developed and consistent across the school as they could be.

The curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) was identified as an area for improvement at the time of the last inspection. A number of improvements have been made and pupils now use ICT to support their learning across the curriculum more effectively.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage take part in an appropriate range of learning experiences. The school lacks an easily accessible outdoor learning area for its youngest children

but makes very good use of an imaginatively organised, extended, indoor learning space. Teachers also arrange frequent trips to the nearby park to enable children to develop an appreciation and understanding of the outdoors and to develop physical skills.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

**Good**

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school is clean and well maintained and staff demonstrate a high level of commitment and competence in promoting pupils' health and safety. The school has devised and implemented a suitable range of policies including anti-bullying, health and safety and behaviour, which all meet recent DfE guidance. The designated persons responsible for safeguarding are trained at the appropriate level, as are the rest of the staff. The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is available for parents and carers to view.

All staff have been checked for their suitability to work with children and the information is held on the required single central register of staff appointments. The school risk assesses a suitable range of activities. The risk assessments are generally good but, occasionally, they lack some detail. For example, the risk assessment for the trip to the local park does not make it clear when high visibility vests should be worn. The fire procedures are suitable, a fire risk assessment is carried out annually, all fire equipment is checked and termly fire drills are documented. Several staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid and the policy meets requirements. Well-stocked first aid boxes are located around the school. All pupils are very well supervised at all times. Admission arrangements and attendance registers are adequately reviewed and monitored.

### **Leadership and management**

**Good**

The leadership and management of the school are good. Leaders have been successful in securing pupils' good achievement over time and are committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a high standard of education. Staff morale is high and leaders have generated a shared commitment to improve the school. The school is successful in meeting its aims and leaders have ensured that an increase in the number of pupils on roll at the school has been managed effectively.

Careful attention to the recruitment of staff has ensured that teachers are knowledgeable, skilled and experienced. Appropriate training and professional development activities are organised for staff. However, teachers do not receive clear, formal, development targets to help them to improve their practice. Consequently, the large majority of teaching is good, but only a small proportion is outstanding.

Senior leaders understand the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and have successfully implemented an action plan to tackle the school's main improvement priorities, including those aspects of teaching and related provision that are preventing outcomes from being outstanding. Accommodation and premises are suitable.

The proprietor and the leaders in school have successfully ensured that the independent school standards have been fully met, through the application of appropriate policies and procedures. Parents and carers have access to all of the information they need including the school's complaints procedure. The large majority of parents and carers would recommend the school to others.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101164
<b>Inspection number</b>	408702
<b>DfE registration number</b>	213/6129

This inspection was carried out 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Boys' pre-preparatory/Girls' preparatory
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	87
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Connaught House School Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	N/A
<b>Principal</b>	Jacqueline Hampton and Fred Hampton (Joint principals)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 November 2009
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£13,200–£14,700
<b>Telephone number</b>	0207 262 8830
<b>Fax number</b>	N/A
<b>Email address</b>	office@connaughthouseschool.co.uk

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