

# St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School

Lord's Roundabout, London NW8 7NE

## Inspection dates

15–17 May 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have continued to make sure that pupils benefit from a good education in a happy and nurturing environment. They have ensured that the school is compliant with all the independent school standards.
- Teaching is good. It is particularly effective in English and mathematics because teachers plan activities that support and challenge pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils make good progress in most subjects. They make outstanding progress and reach high standards in English and mathematics because leaders and teachers frequently check pupils' progress and adapt their planning to meet the individual needs of pupils.
- Leaders provide pupils with a curriculum covering a broad range of subjects and many enrichment opportunities. It makes a strong contribution to pupils' academic success, personal development and well-being.
- Pupils feel safe and secure and they know adults care for them. Pupils are highly inquisitive and very eager to learn. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent.
- Leadership of the early years is highly effective. This ensures that children benefit from an excellent start to their education. The provision is well resourced and offers children a richly stimulating learning environment. Teachers and other adults plan a range of exciting learning opportunities, which challenge children to try their best. Members of staff pay much attention to children's welfare and work very well in partnership with parents and carers.
- Early years staff consistently attend a range of training, which contributes to improving their skills and practice. Staff in key stage 1, however, do not attend training regularly and, subsequently, teaching is not consistently outstanding.
- The newly formed advisory body has made a good start in providing support and challenge to the proprietor and school leaders.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make outstanding progress across the curriculum by:
  - sharpening planning so that activities enable pupils to make substantial gains in all their learning
  - refining assessment systems to check closely on pupils' progress in all areas of learning, and holding teachers to account for their pupils' progress
  - ensuring that all staff benefit from high-quality training to enhance their effectiveness.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders have created a culture of high aspiration in terms of pupils' academic and personal and social development. Leaders place much emphasis on developing pupils' good manners. They provide pupils with a range of learning opportunities in a happy and safe environment where leaders work very closely with parents. All parents who responded to the inspection survey and who spoke with the inspector would recommend this school to other parents. As one parent aptly remarked, 'This is a lovely nurturing school. There is a strong academic focus, and the school maximises each child's potential. However, the school also instils good manners and respect.'
- Leaders have created an ethos where they value all members of staff. In this small school community, leaders, teachers and teaching assistants work collaboratively in the best interests of the pupils. They share best practice, visit each other's lessons frequently and feed back to each other about how they can improve. Leaders carry out annual appraisals and reviews and offer staff one-to-one coaching. There is a range of opportunities to attend off-site training sessions to develop and sharpen their teaching skills. Generally, early years staff readily avail themselves of these opportunities more than their colleagues in key stage 1. As a result, teaching in the early years and teaching of English and mathematics in key stage 1 are outstanding, but in other subjects, it is less effective.
- Leaders plan the curriculum so that pupils gain new knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of subjects. There is a particularly strong emphasis on English and mathematics to ensure that pupils succeed in the seven-plus entry examinations for selective independent schools. The most able pupils are given opportunities to attend lessons in a particular subject in the year group above their chronological age. Teachers challenge the most able pupils in Year 2 with much harder work. Some most-able Year 2 pupils told the inspector that their teacher recently gave them a Year 4 mathematics test, and that they achieved over 90%.
- Leaders employ specialist teachers to teach pupils physical education, swimming, Mandarin, music, drama and chess. This is in addition to class teachers delivering lessons in science, history, geography religious education, citizenship and personal development. Leaders enhance the curriculum by offering pupils many enrichment activities, including visits and visitors to the school. Examples include visits to places of worship, museums, theatres, the local war memorial, bank and post office. Leaders invite parents to participate in assemblies and other events to share their varied experiences, careers, cultures and faiths. These opportunities make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and to their understanding of life in modern Britain.

### Governance

- The proprietor, who is also the principal, recently appointed an advisory board to support him and enhance governance of the school.
- The three members of the advisory board bring much experience and expertise in the fields of education and safeguarding. The board is at the early stages of its work.

Members have visited the school to speak with leaders, staff and pupils, and to observe pupils in lessons and during social times. They provide support to the principal and other leaders, and minutes of their first meeting show that they ask insightful and challenging questions.

- The proprietor, advisory board and school leaders make sure that the school meets the independent school standards and other requirements.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The two associate headteachers have undertaken training as designated safeguarding leaders. Their photographs and contact details are displayed around the school. All members of staff have recently completed an on-line safeguarding refresher course.
- In this small school, staff know all pupils and their families very well. Staff are alert to, and immediately share with leaders, any concerns that arise.
- Leaders work with parents and external agencies, as appropriate, to ensure pupils' welfare.
- Pupils, including children in the early years, learn how to stay safe in different situations. During computing lessons, they learn how to stay safe when using the internet. Members of the police and fire service come to school and talk to pupils about keeping safe. Each year the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children delivers age-appropriate workshops to pupils about inappropriate touching. Leaders invite parents to attend these workshops and assemblies so that they can reinforce these important safety messages at home.
- The school publishes its safeguarding policy on its website. The policy has due regard to current government requirements.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers frequently test pupils in English and mathematics and use this information effectively to plan activities that challenge pupils to reach high standards. In other subjects, teachers and leaders do not track progress as sharply, which means that planning is not as effective. In some cases, therefore, pupils are not able to deepen their knowledge and understanding, such as in history and geography. Overall, teaching and pupils' outcomes are good and not outstanding.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' engagement and behaviour. They and other adults enjoy a strong rapport with the pupils. As a result, pupils work hard and try their best.
- Teachers and classroom assistants work well together. They provide effective support to pupils who need extra help, such as those for whom English is an additional language. Equally, they set more challenging tasks to stretch the most able. As a result, all pupils learn well.
- Teachers give pupils timely feedback to help them improve their work. In line with the school's policy, teachers set pupils daily homework. They maintain a strong liaison with parents so that they can support their child and advise the teacher how well they

managed the work. Further, from Nursery upwards, each Monday, children and pupils have to write an account of how they spent their weekend. These activities help pupils to make substantial and sustained progress in English and mathematics.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Adults encourage pupils to express themselves articulately and with confidence. They model advanced vocabulary so that pupils develop the skills to express their feelings and opinions. Adults pay attention to pupils' views and take them into account when planning activities. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and enjoy their learning.
- From an early age, pupils learn to respect each other and work together. They learn skills such as collaboration, acting, singing, dancing and speaking clearly. The school enters older pupils for an accredited competition in which they have to recite a poem by heart in front of a live audience. Opportunities such as these help build pupils' self-esteem and oracy skills.
- Pupils benefit from weekly physical education and sports lessons. They learn about healthy eating and lifestyles. Pupils know that adults care for them and feel confident to share any concerns with a trusted adult and talk about their feelings. They can choose to write down any concerns and place their notes in a 'worry box'. In these ways, adults support pupils, ensuring their physical health and emotional well-being.
- All pupils, who come from a variety of countries and cultural backgrounds, get on extremely well with each other. There is no bullying in the school, and parents confirmed that their children are safe.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils love coming to school and learning. They are very eager and confidently ask questions because they want to find out more. They pay attention in class and work well independently, in pairs and groups. These highly positive attitudes make a very strong contribution to their learning.
- Pupils are very welcoming to visitors and are keen to share their learning and experiences. They are kind and polite. Pupils all behave very well as they move around the school and at break and lunchtimes.
- Rates of attendance at the school are high.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- During key stage 1, pupils make substantial and sustained progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff give tailored support to any pupil who is not on track to reach high standards. This includes those for whom English is an additional language. Equally, they make sure that the most able are challenged with work that drives them to reach their full potential. Typically, therefore, by the end of Year 2, pupils achieve high

standards in those subjects.

- In other subjects across the curriculum, pupils make good progress. They have a range of opportunities to gain new knowledge and understanding and to apply their skills. However, the quality of their work is not consistently of the same high standard that it is in English and mathematics.
- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Pupils reach high standards in English and mathematics, and leave the school having experienced many exciting learning and enrichment activities. They have excellent attitudes to learning and well-developed social skills. Almost all pupils continue into Year 3 at selective independent schools.

### Early years provision

### Outstanding

- Leaders have no complacency and regularly seek ways to improve. The early years leader works very closely with her team, and together they seek to learn from best practice in other outstanding provisions. Leaders have created a culture in which all staff support each other and work together in the best interests of the children. There are excellent systems in place to check on all aspects of the provision, including on the progress of each child. As a result, children thrive academically and socially.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers plan carefully to meet the children's needs and interests across all areas of learning. There is an excellent balance between child-initiated activities and teacher-led learning. Teachers organise a wide range of activities and use a variety of resources to keep children happily engaged and learning.
- Leaders enrich the curriculum through visits and visitors. Just before the inspection, as part of the life-cycle theme, children visited a farm. Furthermore, they have observed chicks hatch in an incubator and have been reading books and learning about the life cycle of butterflies. On return from the farm, teachers reinforced the key vocabulary that pupils learned and children applied this when they wrote their reflections on the visit. Others wrote about the four stages of a chicken's life cycle, which gave them an opportunity to practise their writing and learn to sequence events. Other groups practised their fine motor skills and artistic creativity by cutting out shapes of chicks and decorating them.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are curious and keen to learn. Just before the start of a phonics lesson, one boy asked the inspector if he would be watching the session. He added, 'Phonics is important. It helps you to read!' Pupils play together, share equipment and readily talk about what they are doing. They persevere and concentrate very well. Leaders make sure that children are safe and cared for.
- Leaders and teachers work exceptionally well with parents. Members of staff speak with parents daily. For those parents who are unable to bring and fetch their children, teachers send home a daily communication book. Parents have access to the school's online system that records the learning and progress of their children. Every Friday, the early years teachers send parents information on what their children have learned during the week. They send them suggested activities to reinforce their children's learning. As children progress in Reception, teachers set homework tasks in reading, writing and mathematics for parents to undertake with their children. This means that parents are

active partners with the school in helping their children learn and develop.

- As a result of the excellent teaching, learning and support, children make very strong progress in all areas of learning. Almost all children in the current Reception class are on track to reach high standards in all areas of learning. Children leave the early years exceptionally well prepared for entry into Year 1.

## School details

Unique reference number	101174
DfE registration number	213/6333
Inspection number	10020767

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Pre-preparatory school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Proprietor	Adrian Ellis
Chair of advisory board	Marie Christie
Principal	Adrian Ellis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,810 - £15,780
Telephone number	0207 722 7149
Website	<a href="http://www.sjwpre-prep.org.uk">www.sjwpre-prep.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@sjwpre-prep.org.uk">info@sjwpre-prep.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	23–24 November 2011

## Information about this school

- St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School was founded in 1982 and caters for pupils from three to seven years old.
- The school's premises are 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.
- This was the school's third standard inspection. The previous inspection was in November 2011.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher left. Last April, the proprietor promoted two members of staff as associate headteachers. One leads the early years and the other key stage 1.



- A three-member advisory board was appointed in September 2017.
- The school's aims are, 'To guide and support each individual in exploring their potential in an exciting, nurturing and safe environment.'

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed learning in eight classes; some were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised. The inspector also checked the school's information about pupils' progress.
- The inspector spoke to the principal, leaders and other members of staff. He met with the chair of the advisory board. The inspector had a formal discussion with the Year 2 class and various informal discussions with pupils during breaktimes and in lessons.
- The inspector considered the 16 responses to the online questionnaire for parents, which included some text responses. He also had informal conversations with parents in the playground. The inspectors took account of the views of eight members of staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire.
- The inspector considered documentation, policies and all aspects of the school's work to check compliance with the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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