

Inspection of St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School

St John's Hall, Lord's Roundabout, London NW8 7NE

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils are kept safe because they are well cared for. They are not worried about bullying and say that any unkindness is sorted out quickly by staff.

Across the school, working relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Pupils are polite and respect others. They understand that good behaviour means that teachers can teach without interruptions to learning. During lunchtimes, pupils sit sensibly together as they eat their meals. Good manners are expected.

Leaders have high expectations that all pupils will gain success in their 7+ examinations. Children in early years benefit from a nurturing start and a well-considered curriculum. This prepares them well for moving into Year 1. Although older pupils find their learning interesting and enjoyable, the curriculum in some subjects is not planned well enough. As a result, pupils do not develop the coherent understanding in all subjects that they need.

Pupils appreciate the weekly community assemblies in the church. They particularly enjoyed a visit from a dentist and learning about good oral hygiene. They are taught about differences, including that others may have needs or ideas that are not the same as theirs. They learn about people from other backgrounds and cultures. Despite these strengths, other aspects of pupils' personal development are not planned for well. This includes relationships and sex education (RSE), and health education.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

In early years, children settle well. They are encouraged to become confident and successful learners. In Nursery, they experience a well-planned curriculum that reflects the guidance for the early years foundation stage (EYFS). In Reception, all areas of learning are taught effectively. Staff make sure that children learn to speak confidently, read and write well, and become proficient with numbers up to 10. For example, in Reception, children understand how share objects fairly, using these to practise counting. This helps children to be ready for the work in Year 1. The school meets the statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS.

In Reception, phonics is taught carefully using an appropriate programme. Teachers have the relevant training and expertise. Children in early years learn the sounds that letters represent and develop their early reading skills confidently. Although pupils in Years 1 and 2 read daily and are taught phonics, they are not taught using the same programme as children in Reception. This means that they do not build on prior learning. Staff have not had recent training and therefore are not aware of the most recent requirements for the teaching of reading. Incorrect terminology is used by some adults, and this causes some pupils to develop misconceptions when reading aloud. Books used to teach reading are not carefully matched to the sounds

that pupils know. As a result, pupils are not building fluency as well as they could. A love of reading, however, is promoted across the school.

The mathematics curriculum is clear and well organised. The important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember is identified. It builds carefully from early years through to Year 2. This is broken down into small steps to help understanding. Teachers understand the different needs of their pupils. They check understanding and provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their understanding in a variety of ways.

Leaders have ensured that the range of subjects taught matches what is expected nationally. However, insufficient thought has been given in some subjects to the subject-specific concepts that pupils need to develop. Too much learning is planned in the moment. Lessons are a series of activities, but these are not well sequenced to make sure that pupils are building the core subject knowledge they need. As a result, while they remember some key facts, pupils' depth of understanding is weaker. For example, in art, pupils copy an artist's work, but they do not learn and understand the skills the artist used. No overall scheme of work is provided in art. Consequently, the school has not met this area of the independent school standards.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified. Staff support pupils with SEND to access the same learning as their peers. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders are committed to providing pupils with the key information they need, for example about keeping safe when online and road safety. However, leaders have not planned an appropriate personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and do not meet their obligations in regard to RSE and health education. The proprietor was unaware that written RSE and health education policies and curriculums are required, or that consultation with parents and carers is also necessary.

Pupils across the school are encouraged to show respect to adults and to each other, and they do. Adults have clear expectations of behaviour and pupils rise to this.

Staff are positive regarding the support they receive with their workload. They say that the school is a small, close-knit community, and they all work together.

The proprietor and the advisory board do not have clear mechanisms in place to ensure that the school meets all the statutory requirements. They do not have sufficient oversight of the independent school standards and, consequently, do not challenge leaders effectively. Similarly, they do not have knowledge and understanding of the school's curriculum, nor how weaknesses in planning impact pupils' learning. As a result, they have not prioritised the improvements required. Not all the independent school standards are met. Leaders are, however, compliant with health and safety policies and procedures. They know about their responsibilities for site safety.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' lack of awareness of changes to policy has led to the administrative omission of RSE and health education guidance. Leaders and staff are, however, fully aware of their statutory safeguarding responsibilities, and pupils are safe. An up-to-date safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.

Leaders are aware of the local contextual issues for their school, and all staff have received training to ensure that they are alert to these. They know how to raise concerns, and these are always followed up quickly.

While there have been no concerns requiring referral to social care or other external agencies, leaders are not complacent. There is an 'it could happen here' philosophy that keeps safeguarding high profile.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The mathematics curriculum is thorough and well organised. This allows pupils to secure important knowledge that helps them understand more challenging ideas. This is not the case for other subjects in Years 1 and 2. While pupils access the full curriculum range, leaders must make sure that curriculum thinking is sufficiently detailed for all subjects. They must identify the important concepts that pupils should learn. This must be well sequenced to build pupils' understanding cumulatively from early years onwards. This will ensure that pupils are developing a deeper understanding of subject-specific content and are able to apply this to future learning.
- In Reception, children get off to a good start with reading. They are taught by well-trained staff using a phonics programme. This is not the case in Years 1 and 2. Leaders must ensure that the teaching of phonics is consistent across the school, and staff in Years 1 and 2 must have sufficient training to deliver the programme. This will make certain that the teaching of phonics builds on prior learning from Reception, to increase pupils' reading confidence and fluency.
- Leaders do not have sufficient awareness or understanding of their statutory responsibilities. They have not made sure that all of the requirements of the independent school standards are met. The proprietor has not established sufficiently robust systems to enable him to challenge and support leaders fully. Consequently, he does not have enough knowledge and understanding about the curriculum that the school provides, nor how this has an impact on pupils' achievement. The proprietor should ensure that there are more robust systems for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the quality of the school's education, the implementation of the curriculum and compliance with all of the statutory and regulatory requirements.

- Leaders do not meet the statutory requirements for RSE and health education. Specific content has not been identified. Parents have not been consulted on what their children will be taught. Leaders should:
 - produce RSE and health education policies
 - identify and produce a clearly sequenced scheme of work for PSHE that meets the current statutory requirements, and then consult with parents
 - ensure that staff are confident to deliver all aspects of the PHSE curriculum
 - put systems in place to assure themselves that the school’s new PHSE curriculum is delivered as planned, so that all pupils access it in full.

How can I feed back my views?

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	101174
DfE registration number	213/6333
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10226765
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Proprietor	Adrian Ellis
Headteacher	David Pilla (Key Stage 1 Association Headteacher) Hetal Shah (EYFS Associate Headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,985 to £16,680
Telephone number	0207 722 7149
Website	www.sjwpre-prep.org.uk
Email address	info@sjwpre-prep.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 to 17 May 2018

Information about this school

- St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School is an independent school that is located in St John's Wood in the London Borough of Westminster. The school shares the building with St John's Wood Church.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education to 124 pupils aged three to seven. There are currently 39 pupils on roll.
- The school has an exemption in place for early years learning and development standards. However, the school uses the statutory framework for the EYFS, alongside the Montessori philosophy of education in the Nursery.
- The proprietor is responsible for governance at the school.
- There are two associate headteachers.
- No children have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school was last inspected in May 2018, when it was judged to be good and all the independent school standards were met.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these areas of learning: early reading, mathematics, art and design and PSHE. To do this, they met with leaders, had discussions with staff, visited lessons and looked at children's work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors met with the proprietor and a member of the advisory board.
- An inspector reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with staff and children. Inspectors also toured the premises and looked at documentation and policies to check compliance with the standards and the requirements of the EYFS statutory framework for safeguarding and welfare.
- The views of children, parents and carers, and staff, as gathered through discussions and Ofsted's surveys, were considered.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and checked arrangements for keeping pupils safe at lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and documents. Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Samantha Ingram, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sophie Healey-Welch

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor–
 - 2A(1)(e) makes and keeps up to date a separate written statement of its policy with regard to the provision of education as required by each of paragraphs (a) and (b),
 - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e), and
 - 2A(1)(g) publishes a copy of the statement on a website and provides a copy of the statement free of charge to anyone who asks for one.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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