



Office for Standards  
in Education

# North London Rudolf Steiner School

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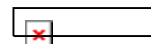
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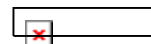
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## Introduction and summary

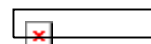


## Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

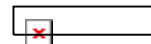
## Information about the school



The North London Rudolf Steiner School opened in 1985 following over ten years' planning. It currently has two parent and toddler group sessions for families with children aged up to two and a half years, a playgroup for children aged from about two and a half years to about three and a half years, which meets for three sessions a week, and two kindergarten groups for children aged from about three and a half years to seven years. In September 2003 the two kindergartens moved into the same premises as the other provision at Campsbourne Baptist Church in Hornsey, North London.

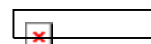
The school follows the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. Most of the children go on to the St Paul's Steiner school in Islington.

## Summary of main findings



The school provides a good range of activities which are well supported by its application of the Steiner philosophy. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the children are encouraged effectively to develop their independence. Overall, their social skills are successfully promoted and the school provides a very supportive environment.

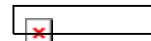
## What the school does well



- The children's social and speaking skills are well developed;
- good opportunities are provided for the children to become independent learners and solve practical problems;
- there are close and effective links with parents and carers; and
- adults in the school have very good relationships with the children which reflect

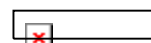
their very caring approach.

### What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations

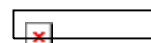


- Prepare and implement a written policy to comply with DfES guidance (reference HSPV2): 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits';
- keep written records of sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious disciplinary offences; and
- make the complaints procedure available on request to parents of pupils and prospective pupils.
- develop more detailed short-term planning and display the daily routine in all classrooms so that all adults and the children are more aware of the pattern and rhythm of the day and the purpose of the activities undertaken;
- consider the range of strategies to be used to modify disruptive behaviour and those available for the older children; and
- clarify more explicitly staff expectations regarding appropriate behaviour.

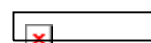
### Compliance with the regulations for registration



#### 1. The quality of education provided by the school



##### The quality of the curriculum



The school follows the Steiner Waldorf curriculum devised by the Pedagogical Section of the School for Spiritual Science, Dornach, Switzerland in cooperation with the Steiner Schools Fellowship. This provides a structured programme of activities related to the children's development and covers the Areas of Learning for the Foundation Stage. The school hours provide approximately 18 hours 20 minutes a week of school-based education and for the rest of the week parents and carers agree to educate their children at home. The school keeps records of this agreement.

In addition to a variety of play activities, each day a particular experience is provided. During the inspection this included making pancakes, planting grass seeds and eurythmy. Also during each session the adults and the children share some food - such as fruit, bread, or home-made soup - and these times are well-organised, social times with good singing. Appropriate attention is paid to hygiene as part of the daily routine.

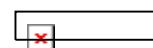
The curriculum is generally matched appropriately to the children's ages and aptitudes. Some of the older children, especially boys, find the indoors sessions rather long. They do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the rhythm of the school day, which crucially underpins the rationale for the pattern and sequencing of activities. The school is aware of this and is beginning to address the

issue appropriately. For example, providing opportunities for these children to have more experiences outside the classroom, whether in the kitchen or the garden. This approach should be planned in greater detail as the children are drawn from both kindergarten classes and the two classes need to ensure that their changes of activities are more closely coordinated. The playgroup usefully displays the daily routine and timetable: this model could be followed by the kindergarten classes.

The curriculum is especially effective in promoting children's personal, social and health education. Speaking and listening skills are promoted very effectively, along with the children's concentration, especially in self-sustained role play. Through independent practical problem solving, they are able to apply their knowledge effectively. Children's progress is good in these areas. In some others, such as mathematics, progress is satisfactory. However, opportunities are not always taken to use their knowledge, such as counting raisins during a snack time or how many bags of soil are being used to prepare the vegetable plot.

Where children have identified special educational needs, good support is provided. This includes working with Haringey LEA's Hearing Impaired Service, which provides weekly in-class support, as well as useful advice to the teaching staff.

### **The quality of the teaching and assessment**



The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The best teaching uses the routines of the day to establish a calm atmosphere which encourages the children to work together from an early age. In the playgroup, the children come in quietly and join in well-prepared activities which are carefully monitored by the teacher and the other adults. They ensure that the children are encouraged to sustain their concentration and to work with one another both indoors and out. Language is also sensitively supported and developed. There are close links with the kindergarten classes. In these classes the age range of the children, from just over three to about seven, poses challenges for the staff, especially where some children may not be able to concentrate during longer activities. However, all children make satisfactory progress and acquire new knowledge as they move through the school.

An appropriate range of activities is provided throughout the kindergarten. Those at the start of the day include a good variety of supervised, semi-supervised and self-directed play. These activities, as in the rest of the sessions, encourage the children to develop their intellectual, physical and creative skills as well as their capacity for independent work. The adults provide good models which the children then imitate; activities are discussed with the children, who respond well. Songs are used effectively to signal changes, such as it being time to tidy up. At the end of the initial extended period, too often the adults clear away without enlisting the help of the children. Carefully chosen stories are told each day, often very effectively. Their daily repetition supports the children's learning as well as the rhythm and pattern of the session throughout the week.

The less satisfactory teaching in the kindergarten classes does not always anticipate potential disruptions or inattention sufficiently. These interrupt the pace and rhythm of the session and other children are distracted. Where difficulties are anticipated, staff often provide different activities for individuals or small groups of children, enabling the majority to continue to work effectively.

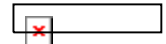
Teachers have a very good understanding of the aptitudes and needs of the children, and parents indicated that they valued this knowledge highly, recognising that it enables the staff to support individuals' progress. There are regular discussions between the staff and parents, often daily, with additional home visits or meetings as required. An annual visit is made to every child's home to discuss progress and the school has a useful personal profile system for recording progress which is supplemented by the teachers' general notes on sessions.

Assessments are used effectively to promote children's social development and well being. They are less clearly focused on developing specific skills, although the school is beginning to address this through differentiating more clearly for the older pupils at specific times during the day.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**



The development of the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness features strongly in the school's curriculum aims and these are essential elements of the Steiner Waldorf philosophy. The school is generally successful in promoting its aims and is particularly effective in developing the children's social skills.

The children's spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily through the many opportunities for learning through experience. Self-motivation is supported within the structure of the sessions and self-expression is encouraged. The children use their initiative and imagination well to create and sustain activities of their own choice. The rhythmic cycle of the year is emphasised through the teachers' choices of activities, themes, stories and songs. Such themes encourage the children to recognise and value the changes that take place within the natural world. Celebrations of festivals throughout the year provide satisfactory religious and cultural experiences for these young children. Opportunities to experience other cultures are less well developed.

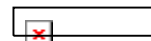
Adults influence children's moral development effectively through their positive models of behaviour towards the children and towards the other adults with whom they work. They promote a positive sense of care and respect for one another which is reflected in the behaviour of the majority of children. However, this positive ethos is undermined on occasions when children are unable to follow the routines which need to be embedded more firmly in the pattern of the sessions. For example, the transition from free play to more directed 'ring time' activities is a critical point in the morning when the atmosphere sometimes breaks down. Many children have not yet developed a sense of responsibility for tidying away resources. Although adults intervene successfully to channel children's energy to purposeful activities they do not always set explicit boundaries for children's behaviour. As a result, younger children occasionally witness models of poor behaviour, particularly from older boys.

Social development is promoted successfully and the majority of children respond positively to the many opportunities provided to share and co-operate with each other through their play. Most enjoy good relationships with each other and increasingly develop the skills to negotiate activities. They are happy to leave their parent/carer and are secure with the adults who care for them and work with them. Many children are articulate and confident to engage in conversation with visitors to whom they extend a warm welcome. The children are encouraged to see themselves as members of a community working and playing together. This is particularly evident at the end of the morning sessions when all children join hands in a ring to sing goodbye to each other. Parents, helpers and visitors are included effectively in the community spirit.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**



Provision for the children's welfare is good. Children are supervised and cared for well throughout the day. Provision for children with special educational needs is good, with well documented plans for supporting individuals. Updated policies, such as those on child protection, anti-bullying, and the 'holding and physical restraint policy and procedure', are discussed at weekly staff pedagogical meetings so that all adults are aware of the contents and implications. These are comprehensive and provide useful practical guidance for staff.

Health and safety matters receive appropriate attention through a satisfactory range of policies and procedures, many of which have been updated recently. The health and safety policy gives clear guidance on routine aspects of safety and on staff responsibilities. All staff have First Aid training and accidents are recorded appropriately under newly-implemented procedures. Regular fire drills are held and the school has taken steps to ensure the children are safe from fire hazards.

The school does not have a written record of sanctions used for serious offences because it has never had to use them. Staff do not always record incidents of children's behaviour which cause concern or which require restraint. This runs counter to its own policy and to the need to record the sanctions used for misbehaviour. Attendance records and the admission register are properly kept.

The school does not have a policy on taking children on educational visits in line with DfES guidance in 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits' (HSPV2), although children are not taken on educational visits unless they are supervised by their own parents.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

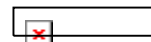
No.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- o prepare and implement a written policy to comply with DfES guidance HSPV2: 'Health and Safety of pupils on Educational Visits' (paragraph 3(2)(c)); and
- o keep written records of sanctions, such as restraint, imposed upon pupils for serious disciplinary offences (paragraph 3(8)).

**4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**



The school is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. The company is represented by the Association, which is the legal body that owns the school. The Association includes the teachers, trustees and the school's Waldorf advisor. There is also a College of Teachers, consisting of the teachers and the Waldorf advisor. The College has responsibility for the day-to-day life of the school and the application of Waldorf education and the anthroposophical approach. In addition the Faculty, composed of all staff members, holds a weekly pedagogical meeting. These are appropriate arrangements which follow Steiner Waldorf approaches.

The school is well supported by a management group made up of teachers, the administrator and parents, and by a finance committee.

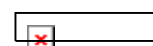
The required checks with the Criminal Records Bureau are made before staff are appointed. Staff have access to in-service training organised through the Rudolf Steiner Fellowship nationally and

regionally, as well as that organised by Haringey Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The EYDCP also sponsors teaching staff from the school on National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and Steiner courses. These are useful contacts which benefit the school.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**



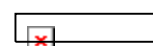
The school is located in church premises and uses generally good sized rooms and other accommodation. One of the two kindergarten rooms is just adequate for the present number of children, but furniture is moved out for some activities. There is a secure outdoor play space. All of the rooms used by the classes and groups in the school have been carefully decorated, with parents' support. Repairs and maintenance are carried out promptly.

The rooms used by the two kindergarten classes are well laid out, with one having a purpose-built mezzanine which usefully extends the activity areas. The school has recently purchased new furniture. This is of good quality and careful account has been taken of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum for this age group when selecting this and other equipment. There are adequate arrangements for children who are unwell. Standards of cleaning and maintenance are good.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**



The school provides a good range of information for parents and prospective parents. The parents' handbook contains all the essential information required by the regulations. The comprehensive description of the curriculum and the helpful explanation of the school's ethos and principles are informative and easy to read. In addition, the school provides regular newsletters and individual teachers send home letters or post notices on the notice board. Further information, and access to school policies, is available on request.

At present, in keeping with its philosophy, the school does not provide parents with a written report on their child's progress and attainment. However, parents have plenty of formal and informal opportunities to discuss their children's needs, development and achievements with the teacher. Teachers gather detailed information about the children when they start school. At the point of transfer to the next school, usually at the age of six, the comprehensive profile on children's physical, emotional and intellectual attainment is discussed with parents. The school is currently reviewing its practice and staff are considering providing parents with a written report at the end of the year based on, and extending, the Foundation Stage Profile. Parents express no concerns about the quality of information they receive. Indeed, high levels of satisfaction were expressed in the parents' questionnaire responses.

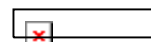
The strong partnership between the staff and the parents contributes much to the sense of

continuity, security and stability for the children. Many parents give their time to help in the school. Parents feel comfortable to approach the staff with questions, suggestions or problems. They expressed high levels of satisfaction on many of the questions in the questionnaire issued before the inspection. All the parents who responded agree that: their children like school and have settled in well; teaching is good and their children are making good progress; and staff treat children fairly and with respect.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**



The school has a written procedure for handling complaints which is published in the parents' handbook. Four stages of the process are identified. Informal contact with the teacher is the initial stage. Stage 2 includes the involvement of a member of the management committee, and stage 3 involves a trustee. The final step is arbitration by a member of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship. Although this structured approach has served the school adequately in the past it does not meet the regulations that came into force in September 2003. During the week of the inspection the school developed a revised complaints procedure which satisfies the regulations. This now needs to be implemented.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

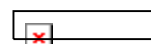
No.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- the school should make the complaints procedure available on request to parents of pupils and prospective pupils (paragraph 7(b)).

**School details**



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Name of school:	North London Rudolf Steiner School
DfES ref number:	309/6067
Type of school:	Steiner
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	2.5 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 18, Girls 11, Total 29
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 7, Girls 9, Total 16
Annual fees (day pupils):	£1,500 to £2,760
Address of school:	North London Rudolf Steiner School Campsbourne Baptist Church and Centre



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Hornsey High Street

Address for correspondence:

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E5 0NH

E-mail address:

info@nlrss.co.uk

Telephone number:

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0208 986 8968 - office

Fax number:

0208 985 1332

Headteacher:

College of Teachers

Proprietor:

North London Rudolf Steiner School

Lead Inspector:

Martin Bradley

Dates of inspection:

23 - 26 February 2004

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