



Office for Standards  
in Education

# The Charterhouse Square School

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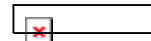
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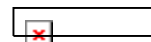
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## Introduction and summary

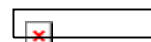


## Purpose and scope of the inspection



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 Charterhouse Square School, founded in 1985 by the present headteacher, is an independent school for boys and girls aged from three to eleven. It occupies a five-storey Victorian building overlooking Charterhouse Square in the Barbican, in central London. The majority of the 171 pupils on roll live within easy travelling distance of the school to the north and east of the City.

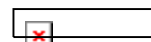
The school believes that a happy and stimulating environment is an essential basis for its own success and for high standards of academic achievement. It aims to:

*'Recognise and provide for the fact that each child is an individual; plan a curriculum of individual as well as common experiences.'*

*'Our wish is to develop a good work ethic, a good attention span an ability to work independently and to follow group instructions.'*

The headteacher and the staff emphasise strongly the responsibilities that pupils should show towards each other and aim to create a caring and supportive learning environment. The school prides itself on successful preparation of its pupils for admission to independent schools of their choice.

## Summary of main findings



Charterhouse Square School is an orderly community where pupils are happy, well behaved, secure and self-confident. The school broadly achieves its aims of helping the pupils to develop good work habits and gain places at schools of their choice. The pupils like coming to school and make good friendships. They are enthusiastic about the sporting and musical opportunities organised by the school.

Although the school teaches most subjects, the curriculum is narrowly defined and the teaching is restricted by an over reliance on prescriptive work books. This limits pupils' progress and has a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Subject specialist teachers make a very

positive contribution to the curriculum, particularly in the teaching of music and dance.

Relationships are good and the headteacher and the staff are committed to the continuous development of their school.

### What the school does well

- The core curriculum is well supported by specialist teaching in music, dance, swimming and sports;
- the pupils are very well behaved in lessons and around the school;
- the quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and the school encourages them to grow into responsible, thoughtful and happy young people. They work industriously, make good friendships and are kind to one another;
- the school gives priority to the care and well being of its pupils and the staff treat the pupils with respect; and
- the school accommodation is well maintained and attractive and provides a safe learning environment.

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

- Ensure that the curriculum and its documentation fully meet the requirements as detailed in section 1 of this report;
- improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching, assessment and resources for learning to meet the needs of all pupils;
- devise and implement a policy to safeguard the health and safety of pupils on educational visits;
- ensure that all staff are subject to satisfactory checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB); and
- provide furniture which is suitable for the age of the pupils.

### Compliance with the regulations for registration

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

#### The quality of the curriculum

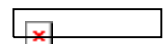
The school's curriculum includes most subjects of the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2. However, its heavy emphasis upon English and mathematics means that other subjects receive less attention. The younger pupils have insufficient experience of design and technology and none in information and communication technology (ICT). The teaching of ICT to pupils in Key Stage 2 is limited to training a commercial office package, although the school is planning to extend provision in this area in the near future. Subject specialist staff teach music, French from the reception group onwards, and dance to the older pupils. Provision for sports teaching is satisfactory. Pupils from reception age upwards go to the local sports facilities for weekly lessons in physical education, tennis and swimming, taught by qualified staff. There is a weekly games session at Coram's Fields, taught by trainees under the supervision of a qualified coach. After-school clubs are popular with pupils and include drama, ICT, music, French, tennis and chess.

The school has an overall curriculum policy but this is not supported by up-to-date schemes of work. Curriculum plans make reference to the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance, but these plans are not fully implemented. Links between subjects are not identified. The curriculum plans do not show adequate progression in skills and knowledge to be taught. An over-reliance on both commercial and school-produced workbooks narrows the curriculum and limits pupils' progress. The teachers set regular homework using workbooks which do not sufficiently reflect work in the classrooms.

The curriculum provided for the nursery and reception age pupils is inappropriate and does not meet the needs of this age group. There is insufficient emphasis on learning through activity, exploration and the development of physical, personal and social skills.

Pupils have very few opportunities for educational visits. Although the headteacher accepts the value of first-hand experience and visits as an important part of learning, these have been curtailed as a result of the recent security alerts in the City of London. Teachers plan to resume these in the near future and a number of visits are booked for the summer term. The older pupils undertake a residential visit each year.

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



The narrowly defined curriculum has an adverse impact on the quality of teaching, which is mostly 'instructional' and lacks inspiration. The teachers follow the prescribed curriculum and the school's policies conscientiously. All the teachers have responsibility for a class and there is specialist teaching of music, French, swimming, tennis and dance, most of which is good or better.

Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. Teachers know their pupils well and enjoy good relationships with them. In all the lessons there is a purposeful atmosphere and pupils work hard at tasks which are often dull and repetitive. They have limited opportunities to apply and increase their knowledge and acquire new skills and understanding. The over-reliance on exercises in the workbooks and set texts restricts the quality of teaching.

The school emphasises the preparation of pupils for the examinations for entrance to selective preparatory and secondary schools, and is successful in helping them to obtain places in schools of their choice. However, this means that lessons often concentrate on practice for such examinations and do not offer sufficient opportunities to develop pupils' practical, investigative, research and creative skills. Most of the written work is limited to answering questions or copying from the board. There are very few opportunities for pupils to apply their well-developed literacy, oracy and numeracy skills to learning in other subjects. Learning objectives are not made clear to the pupils and work is not differentiated to meet individual needs. There are few opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, or to discuss or debate their ideas, which help to clarify misconceptions and develop their thinking and independent learning skills. Although resources are adequate for the

present curriculum, with the exception of ICT equipment, they do not support the development of individual investigative learning skills.

Teachers use a common planning format in their 'mark books' which lists topics to be covered each term, but it does not include the skills or knowledge the pupils should acquire. Although there is no school policy on assessment and marking, all teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously. However, most of this takes the form of ticks, marks and brief comments on handwriting and presentation. There are too few constructive comments to help pupils improve their performance. Results of weekly tests in mathematics and English are recorded for individual pupils. This information is not used to plan teaching and learning. Teachers of younger pupils keep daily logs of their reading and parents contribute to this record. There are two detailed written reports each year, which are discussed with parents at open days.

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

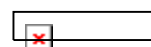
No.

### ***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:

- *implement its curriculum policy fully, and support this with appropriate plans and schemes of work (paragraph 1(2));*
- *ensure that the curriculum gives pupils adequate experience in the technological area of learning (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii));*
- *ensure that the subject matter is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils (paragraph 1(2)(b));*
- *provide a programme of activities appropriate to the needs of pupils below compulsory school age (paragraph 1(2)(h)(ii));*
- *develop the curriculum so as to provide for all pupils the opportunity to learn and make progress (paragraph 1(2)(i));*
- *ensure that the teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability (paragraph 1(3)(a));*
- *develop the range of teaching styles so as to encourage pupils to apply intellectual, physical and creative efforts and to show interest in their work and to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 1(3)(b));*
- *plan lessons so as to employ effective teaching methods and to provide suitable activities (paragraph 1(3)(c));*
- *ensure that teachers have a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils and take these into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d));*
- *provide classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range (paragraph 1(3)(f));*
- *put a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, and use this information to plan teaching (paragraph 1(3)(g)); and*
- *provide an education which enables all pupils in a class to make progress (paragraph 1(5)).*

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



The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, although opportunities for acquiring an appreciation of their own and other cultural traditions are limited. The good relationships, praise and encouragement from adults helps the pupils to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. They are taught to respect one another and distinguish right from

wrong. Pupils are polite and behave responsibly, showing self-discipline and care for their school environment. They are thoughtful and reflective in their responses to teachers' questions and considerate in their behaviour towards to each other.

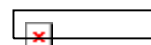
The pupils respond well to opportunities to develop a socially responsible attitude by raising funds for charitable causes. For example, they have raised funds for Great Ormond Street Hospital, NSPCC and an aid project in South Africa. They visit elderly residents in Charterhouse to sing carols at Christmas and contribute funds raised at carol concerts to various charities. The local Rector contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development by regularly taking school assemblies. The older pupils show care and concern towards the younger pupils and happily play alongside them during break times.

Very good provision is made for personal, social and health education for the older pupils through the Corporation of London project team on Drugs and Resistance Education (D.A.R.E). A 16-week course, taught by a police officer, provides effective opportunities for pupils to discuss issues dealing with smoking, drugs, alcohol and anti-social behaviour. It provides them with strategies to deal with potentially difficult situations positively and assertively. Teaching methods such as role play, the discussion of scenarios and case studies help pupils to draw effectively on their personal experience for learning in these sessions.

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

Yes.

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



The school is an orderly community. Although rules are displayed in some areas of the school, pupils understand implicitly what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are happy at the school and feel safe.

Class teachers are responsible for the pastoral welfare of their pupils. They are vigilant and closely supervise the pupils at all times. The school has an appropriate child protection policy, with the head teacher as the named member of staff to serve as the point of contact. Pupils report that any instances of bullying are quickly dealt with.

Fire drills are held regularly and accurately documented. Fire appliances are checked annually. A specialist firm has carried out a fire risk assessment. A satisfactory fire report was issued following the fire officer's most recent visit to the school.

Admission and attendance registers are kept according to current regulations. Morning playtimes are held indoors and pupils use this opportunity for socialising. During good weather pupils enjoy the use of the attractive garden in Charterhouse Square. An accident book is kept up to date and the majority of staff are trained in First Aid. Safe travel arrangements are made and pupils are closely supervised when attending lessons off-site. The school has devised procedures to identify and control health and safety risks both at school and on visits to local sports centres and the swimming pool, but not on educational visits.

Although the Victorian building offers a limited scope for easy access, the head teacher has devised a satisfactory plan which fulfils the school's duties under the Disability Discrimination act.

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

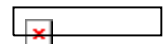
*The school complies with the regulations in all but one respect.*

***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:

- *devise and implement a written policy on the health and safety of pupils on educational visits in accordance with DfES guidance 'HSPV2' (paragraph 3(2)(c), 3(4)).*

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



The school is owned by Cleveland Education Limited and the headteacher is the sole proprietor. All staff are suitably qualified and have varying lengths of teaching experience. Subject specialist staff make a valuable contribution to the school curriculum.

Staff appointment procedures are adequate. The teachers are first employed on a trial basis. Their performance during this period is taken into account together with their references in determining the confirmation of their appointment. The newly-appointed teachers are informed of the school's policies and procedures by the headteacher, although there is no formal policy on staff induction. Satisfactory checks on all the staff currently employed in the school have not yet been obtained. However, the school has recently taken steps to address this by amending the appointments procedures. Applications have been forwarded to carry out appropriate checks with the CRB for new and staff already appointed to the school. Confirmation of their clearance is still outstanding.

The headteacher allocates two weeks as 'study time' for staff each school year, some of which is used for in-service training. However, there are limited opportunities for staff development which is systematically linked to identified school development priorities.

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

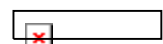
*No.*

***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:

- *ensure that all staff are subject to satisfactory checks with the CRB to confirm their suitability to work with children.*

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



The school has suitable, well maintained premises in a five-storey Victorian terraced building overlooking Charterhouse Square. The accommodation has been adapted for its purpose and is in good decorative order. Teachers have created colourful learning areas in their rooms and in corridors, with attractive displays which celebrate pupils' achievements. However, the integrated

tables and chairs, especially for the younger pupils, are too large and inappropriate.

Security at the school is good. Due to the constraints of the building there are few subject specialist areas. Four computers are presently housed in a classroom, which limits their availability to the older pupils. The headteacher plans to extend this provision in the near future.

The room occupied by the oldest pupils is congested and unsuitable for practical activities. The classrooms used by the younger pupils offer scope for activity based learning which is currently not part of the curriculum. There are limited outdoor facilities for play or physical development of the youngest pupils but the local leisure and sports facilities are used well to teach the PE curriculum and extra-curricular activities to older pupils. The basement is used well for music, dance and school assemblies. The school has access to the small private park in Charterhouse Square in good weather conditions.

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

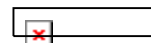
No.

***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:

- *provide furniture which is appropriately designed for the age of the pupils (paragraph 5(r)).*

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



The parents are supportive of the school, take a keen interest and are eager to become more involved in the school to support their children's learning. Almost 80% of the parents responded to the questionnaire sent by the inspectors and they express general satisfaction with the school's provision. They feel their children are happy, enjoy coming to school and make good progress in gaining basic skills, although they would like to see a broader curriculum and more opportunities for trips or visits outside lessons. A significant minority of parents express hesitation in approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem and would welcome information on the school's procedure for handling complaints.

The school provides all prospective parents with a well-presented and informative prospectus. It meets the statutory requirements and includes information on the school's aims and ethos, curriculum and procedures. Further information on the curriculum and school policies is available on request.

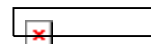
Reports are issued twice a year. These are clear and detailed. There are two formal consultation sessions where parents can discuss their child's progress. Teachers are available at the beginning and end of the school day to talk with parents informally. There are no opportunities for parental involvement in school, although they are invited to formal events such as the carol service and the annual school musical.

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

Yes.



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

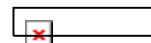


The school has a written procedure for handling complaints which meets the regulations, although some parents were unsure of its detail. The head teacher is taking immediate steps to rectify this situation.

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

Yes.

## School details



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Name of school:	The Charterhouse Square School
DfES ref number:	201/6354
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 80,                      Girls 91,                      Total 171
Annual fees (day pupils):	£7,650
Address of school:	The Charterhouse Square School 40 Charterhouse Square London EC1M 6EA
E-mail address:	csschool@msn.com
Telephone number:	0207 600 3805
Fax number:	0207 600 2957
Headteacher:	Mrs J Malden
Proprietor:	Cleveland Education Limited
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Usha Sahni HMI
Dates of inspection:	8 - 11 March 2004

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