



Office for Standards
in Education

Beehive Preparatory School

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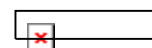
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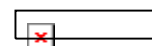
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Introduction and summary

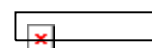


Purpose and scope of the inspection



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



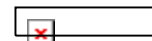
Beehive Preparatory School was founded on its current site in Redbridge in 1926. It gradually developed from a single class infant school to a preparatory school for pupils aged four to eleven years.

There are 91 pupils on roll, who mainly live within a short travelling distance from the school, and represent diverse cultural backgrounds. All classes except the Reception class are mixed-age classes, within a two-year age range. The two proprietors have full-time teaching responsibilities and are supported by a secretary and four members of teaching staff. It is a family-run enterprise and other members of the proprietors' family volunteer considerable time to working with the pupils.

The school is non-selective and aims *to provide a sound, traditional education in the core curriculum areas, in an environment that the children find safe, friendly, comfortable and*

welcoming.' A community atmosphere and promotion of a strong sense of belonging in each child are strong themes pursued in all that the school strives to achieve.

Summary of main findings

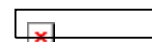


Beehive Preparatory is a happy school, where pupils are respected, valued as individuals and well cared for. It achieves its aims and promotes successfully positive attitudes and good work habits amongst its pupils. They behave responsibly, grow in confidence and are articulate in expressing their opinions and views on a range of subjects. They enjoy coming to school and make good friendships, becoming self-assured young people, who will be able to make a smooth transition from primary to secondary education. The parents are supportive and express a high level of satisfaction with the school.

While the quality of teaching is good in the Reception and Years 5 and 6 it is unsatisfactory in almost one in five lessons. Despite this the pupils become fluent readers at an early age and standards in speaking and listening are high.

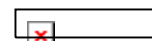
Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment result from uneven implementation of schemes of work and lesson planning. Work is sometimes not appropriately matched to pupils' needs and some pupils do not make progress in line with their abilities.

What the school does well



- the strong emphasis on the teaching of reading, writing, numeracy, speaking and listening skills results in high standards in these areas;
- the provision for pupils' social and moral development is good and the school helps them to become very well-behaved, confident, and caring young people;
- it provides effectively for pupils' welfare and well-being;
- the good teaching in Reception and Classes 5 and 6 contributes significantly to the pupils' achievement and progress; and
- the school places a great emphasis on developing good relationships with the parents: it is successful in this.

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



- ensure that the teaching plans are based on the school's schemes of work and are implemented effectively;
- ensure that all lessons are well planned, and the teaching methods and activities take full account of pupils' differing needs and abilities and enable all pupils within a class to make progress;
- provide a suitable range and quantity of resources for teaching the curriculum to each age group;
- ensure that opportunities are planned across all curriculum subjects for pupils to deepen their understanding of their own and others' cultural heritage;

- prepare risk assessments for educational visits;
- to have regard to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance: "Health and Safety": Responsibilities and Powers";
- provide adequate washrooms for all pupils. Provide a supply of hot water to the washbasins in the boys' toilets and ensure that the temperature of hot water supplies in the school does not exceed 43°; and
- ensure that all flooring is in good condition.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

☐

1. The quality of education provided by the school

☐

The quality of the curriculum

☐

The curriculum covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum including French, from Year 3 onwards. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and speaking and listening. The school day is structured to teach English, mathematics and science, history and geography in the mornings, taught by the class teachers. During each of the four, shorter, afternoon sessions, there is a focus on different subject areas covered in rotation by staff other than the class teachers. These half-term blocks ensure adequate time allocation to each of the subjects over the course of the academic year.

The national guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum forms the basis of the planning in the Reception class. Written policies are in place for all subjects of the curriculum. The school's schemes of work, modelled on those published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are expected to inform teaching plans in each subject. Health education, which includes sex and drug education, is taught as part of the science curriculum.

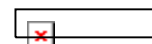
There is not yet a coherent whole-school approach to long and short-term planning. It does not build systematically on existing knowledge, understanding and skills as pupils move from one key stage to another. Teachers' plans do not consistently reflect the school's schemes of work or ensure provision of appropriate teaching methods and materials. There is considerable variation in the quality of planning and recording of what is taught. This results in a lack of balance, continuity and progression in pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics, science, history and geography. Careful monitoring is needed throughout the school in order to ensure that subjects are taught consistently and thoroughly.

The school places a greater emphasis on the acquisition of factual knowledge than developing skills of investigation, experimentation and independent learning. This limits the range of skills in many subjects, and is most noticeable in the narrow range in pupils' writing.

Regular homework is set and is used to extend and reinforce classroom work. The resources to support the curriculum are limited. Text books are in short supply and the range and quality of book stocks need review. The resources for the Foundation Stage do not fully support all areas of learning, in particular creative and imaginative play and physical development. In order to

compensate for the constraints of the site, the school makes effective use of the nearby church hall for physical education activities. The teachers offer limited opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning by visiting places of interest, linked to topics being studied.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in four out of five of the lessons, but there are a number of common weaknesses in the unsatisfactory lessons. There is particularly good teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6. In better lessons, the teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They identify clear learning objectives and provide well-matched teaching activities which extend pupils' learning. Carefully selected resources, clear explanations and probing questioning by the teachers help to promote pupils' understanding. For example, in the reception class, the pupils enjoyed the opportunity to handle, observe and talk about a range of old and new household objects. They were fascinated by a toasting fork and an Edwardian iron. Through this practical activity the pupils developed the skills of observation and comparison, and gained an understanding of the difference between modern appliances and those used in the past.

Very good relationships between the staff and the pupils create a positive learning environment and pupils settle to work quickly and confidently. They respond to class discussions willingly and are keen to give of their best at all times. They take pride in their work and presentation is consistently of a high standard.

However, some of the unsatisfactory lessons are marked by common weaknesses. These include a lack of focus in planning and teaching which is over-directed and does not allow pupils opportunities to think and learn for themselves. Too much talk from the teacher in these lessons restricts the pupils' ability to express themselves and demonstrate their understanding. Insufficient account is taken of the pupils' differing needs and abilities, which results in a lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils and insufficient help for those in need of additional support.

The school has recently introduced a system to record pupils' progress in the different subjects taught. The 'record book' consists of statements from the Foundation Stage and National Curriculum documents, and some of the school's schemes of work. However, this new system is not yet fully implemented and does not inform teachers' planning. In the small classes, the teachers know their pupils well and keep personal records of their test scores. The school needs to review and monitor its planning and assessment systems to ensure that there is a common approach throughout the school.

The results of the annual examinations are not analysed or used to set targets for improvement. There is no agreed policy on the marking of pupils' work. As a result, the quality of marking is variable. It is often cursory and although the comments on presentation and pupils' attitudes are positive, they often fall short of providing guidance on how the work might be improved.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

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

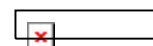
In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- *ensure that the teaching plans are based on the school's schemes of work and implemented effectively (paragraph 1(2));*
- *ensure all lessons are well planned, and the teaching methods and activities take*

full account of pupils' differing needs and abilities and enable all pupils within a class to make progress, including those who have specific learning needs. (paragraphs 1(3)(c), 1(3)(d) and 1(5)); and

- *provide a suitable range and quantity of resources for teaching to each age group (paragraph 1(3)(f)).*

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



The provision for pupils' social and moral development is good. Social development is promoted successfully and pupils respond positively to the opportunities to share and co-operate with others through their work and play. A family atmosphere pervades the school. The proprietors strive hard to maintain the community ethos which has been a strong feature of Beehive School for many years. The values of honesty, fairness and respect are at the forefront of daily life. Relationships are very good within and between year groups, with older pupils adopting a caring role towards the younger children. In particular, the monitors with specific responsibilities for the pupils in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are extremely conscientious about their roles. Pupils are confident, polite and self-assured. They are articulate when talking to visitors, to whom they extend a warm welcome.

The school has a clear behaviour policy which is understood by pupils and their parents. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. They play together socially at break times. All the pupils know what is expected of them and comply willingly with the school's rules and expectations. They have a good understanding of what is right and wrong. As they grow older, they develop a keen awareness of moral issues and demonstrate a high degree of maturity when discussing them. The school supports a number of local and national charities and through these pupils show their care and concern for others.

The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory. The development of pupils' spiritual awareness is not identified in the school's planning. Opportunities in lessons for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge and to reflect upon the issues covered, are only incidental. Teachers need to provide pupils more opportunity for reflection in all subjects by giving more attention to it in their planning. This should enable them to further their sense of awe and wonder, and to reflect on their work and personal development.

There are few opportunities for pupils to experience life beyond school. Visits to art galleries, museums and places of interest are not regular features of the school's curriculum. Only one class makes regular visits to places linked to the topic being studied. Occasionally, there are visits from people within the community.

There is inadequate provision for pupils' to increase their knowledge and deepen their understanding of the different cultures that make up the society in which they live. Celebrations of the main religious festivals help pupils to enjoy and understand some cultural differences. Parents support these well by offering special food and artefacts. Opportunities to reflect upon the multicultural nature of society are provided through the pupils' wide range of backgrounds and pupils gain an understanding of the differences in a range of cultures. However, cultural topics are not included in the planning. The school needs to ensure that all sections of the curriculum recognise the opportunities to extend further the pupils' appreciation of their own and others' cultural heritage.

Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding of citizenship and the local public services and to understand the importance of good health.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

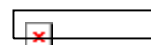
The school meets almost all the requirements.

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

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

- *ensure that opportunities are planned for pupils to deepen their understanding of their own and others' cultural heritage (paragraph 2(e)).*

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school takes due care of the health and safety of its pupils. Parents who replied to the questionnaire endorsed this. The headteacher retains overall responsibility. Pupils are well supervised while on the school premises. All adults form close and trusting relationships with pupils. Discussions with pupils show they feel secure and can turn to a number of adults if they need comfort and help. Pupils are good at taking care of each other, not just in the way they naturally work and play together, but through more formal methods such as the play ground 'buddies' scheme.

There are clear written policies to promote good behaviour amongst pupils and to prevent bullying. The importance of the welfare and safety of pupils on out-of-school visits is well documented. However, teachers do not always carry out risk assessments prior to out-of-school activities and visits.

Child protection procedures are in place. The headteacher undertakes the role of the designated person. There are good written guidelines to raise teachers' awareness of the issues of child protection and all staff have received appropriate training. The First Aid policy outlines clearly the procedures to be used in case of accidents in the school. The First Aid box contains basic medical resources and records are kept of all accidents with the treatment given noted. Some staff are trained in emergency First Aid.

Fire drills take place regularly and are recorded appropriately. All fire escape signs are located in appropriate places.

Admission and attendance registers are maintained satisfactorily.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

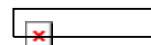
No.

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 a risk assessment is prepared for all educational visits and outings (paragraph 3(2)(c)); and*
- *in all matters of health and safety to have due regard to the DfES guidance: 'Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers' (Paragraph 3(4)).*

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are the proprietors with full-time class teaching responsibilities. The school secretary is a key member of staff and helps to ensure efficient day-to-day management of the school.

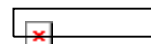
The procedures for recruitment of teaching and support staff are good and fully meet the regulations. References are taken up and enquiries made about the candidates' medical fitness and previous employment history prior to confirmation of their appointment.

The school is registered with the Criminal Records Bureau and all members of staff are appropriately checked.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The accommodation is suitable for the current number of pupils on roll. The school is accommodated in a house built in the early 1900's, and the site has been used as a school for almost 75 years. The accommodation is generally well maintained, although some flooring shows signs of wear. Despite the cramped conditions in the classrooms, the teachers have created attractive displays which celebrate pupils' work and achievements. The classrooms are barely adequate in size for the current number of pupils, particularly in classes for the oldest pupils. The lack of space can sometimes inhibit the practical aspects of learning in subjects such as science, art and mathematics. In the absence of a hall, the school makes good use of the playground and the local church premises to teach physical education, including dance. The local football field and park are occasionally used for games, sport and practical work for pupils in Key Stage 2.

The playground is small for the number of pupils on roll. Staggering the break times prevents overcrowding and ensures safe recreational play. The staff are conscious of the limitations of a small play space and provide adult-led activities in order that all pupils can enjoy their recreation time and make safe use of play equipment. The school has tried to utilise the garage to provide curriculum activities for the Foundation Stage, which require additional space for activities such as sand and water play and large apparatus. However, due to lack of lighting and heating, only limited use is made of this facility.

There are sufficient washrooms for the number of pupils on roll, but not all of these meet the regulations for school premises. The outside toilets for boys are unheated and the wash basins lack a hot water supply. Boys have to leave the safety and comfort of the building to face all weather conditions in order to use this uninviting facility. The temperature of hot water in the indoor washrooms is too high for the pupils' use and needs to be lowered to make it safe. On occasions, older girls share the toilet facility used by male and female teachers because there is lack of privacy in the toilets used by girls. This is not an ideal arrangement and needs reviewing.

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 adequate washrooms for all pupils, ensuring pupils and staff do not share washrooms. Provide a supply of hot water to the washbasins in the boys' toilets and ensure that the temperature of hot water supplies in the school do not exceed 43°F (paragraph 5(k)); and*
- *ensure that all flooring is of good condition (paragraph 5(s)).*

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners

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Communication between home and school is good, on formal and informal levels. Beehive school considers it important to establish a family atmosphere in the school. The school enjoys very good relationships with its parents, who are active in their support through a parent-teacher association. They organise fund raising, social events and fairs, and whole school outings to places of interest to children. Almost eighty percent of the parents responded to the questionnaire sent by the inspectors, and their views reveal a very high level of satisfaction with the school. All the parents agreed that their children like the school, they were helped to settle in well when they started and their children are making satisfactory progress. Parents feel comfortable in discussing their concerns with the school and appreciate the swift and effective handling of these. The headteacher and staff consider it important to offer a personal welcome to their pupils and parents at the start of each school day.

Parents and prospective parents are offered a good range of information about the school. A regular newsletter keeps parents informed of the events and activities of interest to them. New parents receive an informative prospectus which contains the appropriate information. Additional policy documents are available on request.

The parents are kept informed about their children's progress. Parents' meetings are held twice a year and are well attended. Reports, which include grades for effort and attainment in different areas of the curriculum, are sent out at the end of the summer term. Regular homework is set for pupils and provides a useful means of involving parents in their children's schooling.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

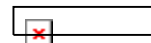
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The school has responded appropriately to the new regulations and has a clear policy and procedure for handling complaints. The headteacher has made arrangements for ensuring that all the parents receive this updated information, which has also been included in the school brochure for all prospective parents.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	Beehive Preparatory School
DfES ref number:	317/6051
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 49, Girls 42, Total 91
Annual fees (day pupils):	£3,000
Address of school:	Beehive Preparatory School Beehive Lane, Redbridge Essex IG4 5ED
E-mail address:	chris@beasant.com
Telephone number:	0208 550 3224
Headteacher:	Mr C J Beasant
Proprietor:	Mr C J & Mrs J Beasant
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Usha Sahni HMI
Dates of inspection:	10 - 13 May 2004

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