



Office for Standards
in Education

Breaside Preparatory School

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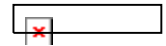
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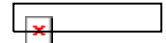
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Introduction and summary

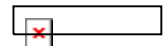


Purpose and scope of the inspection



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



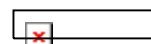
Breaside Preparatory School is an independent co-educational school situated in the London Borough of Bromley. The school, founded in 1952, is now part of the Asquith Court Schools Group Limited. At the time of the inspection there were 235 pupils on roll, aged 3 to 11, of which 45 attended the nursery/kindergarten on a part-time basis, and 27 pupils were in the reception classes. The school is currently seeking registration for the flexible daycare it provides both before and after school.

Breaside is a non-denominational school and the mix of nationalities is representative of the suburban London population. Entry into the kindergarten is non-selective but academically selective for entry into other years. All the bilingual pupils speak English fluently and do not require additional language support. Sixteen percent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational

needs (SEN) but there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need.

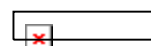
Breaside's mission statement emphasises the importance of the pursuit of high standards of achievement within the context of a happy, caring and friendly family atmosphere. It aims to provide a rich learning environment which cultivates and broadens the pupils' interests and prepares them for successful entry to independent senior and maintained grammar schools at eleven. It is proud that most pupils gain entry into these selective schools and that a significant number of pupils are awarded scholarships.

Summary of main findings



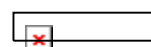
Breaside Preparatory School is a good school with many strengths. It offers a stimulating learning environment in which the pupils develop very good attitudes to learning, make good progress and achieve high standards in many areas of the curriculum. Parents are welcome in the school and they and their children are enthusiastic in their support of it.

What the school does well



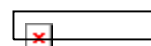
- o teaching is good and very good in some curriculum areas;
- o pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve high standards in the core subjects;
- o pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good;
- o pupils develop very good speaking, listening, numeracy and literacy skills;
- o pupils demonstrate tolerance and respect for all members of the school community;
- o the school makes effective use of specialist teachers; and
- o pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

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



- o ensure that school staff are deployed in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of pupils;
- o prior to the appointment of staff carry out the appropriate checks to confirm medical fitness; and;
- o ensure that all the accommodation allows for effective teaching and does not compromise the health and safety of the pupils.

Next Steps

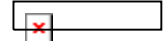


Although not required by the regulations to do so, the school may like to consider the following

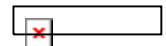
actions in order to further its development:

- review the balance of the curriculum and seek ways to increase allocated curriculum time to subjects such as design and technology (D&T) and religious studies (RS); and
- devise a co-ordinated approach to curriculum development throughout the school and monitor its effectiveness.

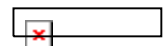
Compliance with the regulations for registration



1. The quality of education provided by the school



The quality of the curriculum



The curriculum has good breadth but lacks balance where some subjects are over dominant. The school has begun to redress this imbalance but the curriculum would benefit from further review. The lack of subject leadership and monitoring across the key stages reduces teachers' knowledge of the curriculum as a whole. The impact of this is most noticeable in the absence of systematic planning for design and technology (D&T) which results in patchy provision that is dependent on staff confidence and expertise.

Appropriate long-and medium-term plans with schemes of work for all subjects, with the exception of D&T, ensure suitable content and coverage of the National Curriculum. D&T is combined with art and the subject's specific design elements do not feature strongly enough. Some policies and schemes have been updated recently whilst others are due for review. Staff use and adapt many nationally published schemes, for example in information and communication technology (ICT), to good effect. The planning for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is very good. Not surprisingly, standards in these subjects are high. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) has been reviewed recently to incorporate key elements from a published scheme. This includes suitable work on relationships, responsibilities, and health. Drugs education is given appropriate attention.

The curriculum for pupils in the kindergarten and reception class is well planned and follows national guidance to cover the six areas of learning. Staff place a suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy but not at the expense of other areas which are planned in depth. Reception pupils do not have continuous access to outdoor facilities owing to lack of space, but staff work hard to create specific times for children to experience physical activities that develop hand-eye co-ordination. However, equipment for climbing is limited and this restricts pupils' opportunities for physical development.

The curriculum is extended effectively by the introduction of French from reception onwards and by a good range and number of visits to places of local interest as well as by visitors to the school. For example, during the inspection a 'Roman soldier' visited Key Stage 2 pupils and a Hindu lady came to speak to Year 2 pupils about her faith. 'Activities' for pupils in Key Stage 2 provide further scope for breadth with a varied range of interesting opportunities. A total of thirteen activities are offered

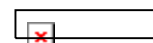
from which pupils choose two. These include elements of sports, the arts, ICT, science and chess. However, lack of guidance to pupils about the choices they make each term results in some pursuing a narrow range.

A strong emphasis in the curriculum on the basic skills of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy results in pupils who are articulate and confident; they write very well using a wide vocabulary. For example, a Year 5 pupil showed effective use of figurative language in the following lines of a poem in which she described a fox as *'white icing stomach and a snow drop tail, ginger snap fur and night time feet, eyes like the sun'...* *'razor teeth like tips of paper'*. Reading skills are promoted effectively across the curriculum. An increasing focus on problem solving activities in mathematics and good attention to investigative approaches provide pupils with ample opportunities to apply their skills. The school gives prominence to games and sports, and organises competitive matches against local schools as a regular feature of the sporting timetable. Teams enjoy much success.

The balance of the curriculum is uneven. A high allocation of time to physical education (PE) and 'activities' in Key Stage 2 reduces the time available for teaching subjects such as religious studies (RS), PSHE, music, ICT and D&T. Despite the lack of time, music makes a strong contribution to the curriculum and to pupils' lives because of additional opportunities, such as choir and singing practices. Individuals can also opt to pay for additional instrumental lessons. Opportunities for using ICT have improved recently with additional resources and a refurbished room with compatible machines. Increasing use of ICT across the curriculum is evident in displays and in pupils' work, especially in upper part of the school. This supports the one lesson per week on ICT skills. Some good links are developing between subjects, for example in English and history, mathematics and science and ICT. These examples could be usefully extended to help to redress the balance between subjects.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is generally good. It is very good where individuals receive specialist teaching. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage and their progress is monitored carefully. However, in class, activities are not always modified sufficiently for these pupils although staff are alert to their needs and provide additional support for them to complete similar work to the other pupils.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is good and very good in some curriculum areas. It is of a consistently high standard in French, music and in the reception classes. Overall, the quality of teachers' planning is satisfactory. It is generally good in the core subjects and very good in the reception classes. In most subjects the schemes of work provide useful guidance to the teachers, ensuring that the lessons are planned to enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers explain clearly to the pupils what they are going to learn and lessons contain an appropriate balance of discussion, practical and investigative activities and independent work.

Pupils benefit from the regular individual attention they receive from their teachers. They are not afraid to ask for help and are very willing to contribute to discussions in an enthusiastic manner. As a result, they become increasingly articulate and confident, developing very good speaking and listening skills. For example, in a year 2 science lesson a lively and mature discussion on environmental issues resulted from an investigation into tropical rainforests.

Pupils behave well and work hard. In the very good lessons, the teachers' strong specialist knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject inspires the pupils to develop very positive attitudes towards learning. High expectations are set and the lessons have a general atmosphere of purpose and endeavour. Consequently, the pupils concentrate hard and remain focussed. The teachers exploit the incidental opportunities that arise from the pupils' comments and questions. Pupils are challenged to solve problems and think for themselves. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics

lesson pupils were asked to think about the problems associated with the recording of household income and expenses. This was an excellent introduction to the use of spreadsheets for organising and manipulating data.

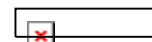
In the few less successful lessons there were some common weaknesses. Teaching is over-directed, delivered in a dry manner and dominated by an over reliance on worksheets and text books.

The school's procedures for the assessment of the pupils' work are good. They are very good in the reception classes. The marking policy provides useful guidance to the teachers but it is not applied consistently across the school. There are however examples of careful and detailed marking which provide the pupils with a clear assessment of what they have done well and explain how to improve. In the best lessons observed, pupils received ongoing verbal assessment on their work. This was effective in securing very good progress and in motivating the pupils to succeed. The school uses a range of effective mechanisms to assess the pupils' attainment such as the foundation stage profile, weekly and half termly testing and end of year tests. Standardised and national tests are taken regularly to assess the pupils' progress, and results show that they make good progress throughout the school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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



The school has a new policy statement that sets out clearly its aims to '*promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life*'. The school is successful in meeting these aims. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. It is implicit within the warm relationships that are enjoyed between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves. Pupils feel safe and happy; they know who to turn to for help. Parents' positive views of this area of the school's work are fully justified.

Assemblies make a sound contribution to provision for pupils' spiritual development. Regular feedback from teachers helps pupils to know how well they are doing and this contributes to their self awareness. Their achievements are celebrated regularly both in class and in assemblies with the aim of raising their self-esteem. Younger children are successfully encouraged to be independent, to use their initiative and to make choices within their daily activities. Pupils gain the confidence to speak about their personal experiences. Others listen with sympathy. Pupils are thoughtful and sensitive when writing about feelings. For example, in a Year 6 RS lesson pupils wrote with real empathy for Moses' mother as she set him adrift in a basket.

Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Staff have high expectations of behaviour. The strong and consistent focus on rewards and praise for good behaviour and effort is reflected in the responsible way that pupils move around school. School rules are reinforced consistently by staff and merit systems work well as pupils are keen to earn stars. Pupils' understanding of right and wrong is demonstrated clearly in their very good behaviour and good relationships. Pupils show respect for one another and for the school rules. They are friendly and polite to each other and to visitors who are greeted readily with a warm smile. Unacceptable behaviour is rare though pupils are occasionally restless when teaching is not stimulating. Pupils are confident that incidents of antisocial behaviour and unkindness, though infrequent, are dealt with swiftly by teachers. Moral and social issues are discussed, for example, in lessons in PSHE and in assemblies. Participation in sports teams and the regular programme of activities contributes much to pupils' social development as they learn to support each other in teams, to play fairly and to accept defeat gracefully. Pupils are encouraged to think of others less fortunate than themselves

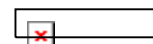
through their collections for charities such as Leukaemia Research, and to consider issues such as looking after the environment.

Opportunities for pupils' cultural development are good. Through in-depth studies in history and geography, pupils become increasingly aware of cultures and traditions in Britain and countries in the wider world. RS appropriately includes the study of world religions. French lessons make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of other cultures, as do opportunities to respond to music from a range of countries and cultures. Drama productions enhance pupils' knowledge of literature as well as offering the chance to perform to an audience. The wide range of trips to places of interest provides further cultural enrichment. Pupils from different ethnic and religious backgrounds are well integrated so that all work and play together harmoniously.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



Throughout the school the general care for the welfare of pupils is good. The school has implemented appropriate policies to prevent bullying and to protect pupils from abuse. There are effective procedures which promote the pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Favourable relationships between staff and pupils underpin the firm foundation for personal development that is evident throughout the school. The school environment is one in which the pupils feel secure and valued as individuals.

Policies to safeguard pupils' health and safety are comprehensive, both within the school site and for activities off site. In the main, staff are deployed to ensure the proper supervision of pupils. However, the school grounds are fairly extensive and not all pupils are sufficiently closely supervised during playtimes. In addition there are insufficient members of staff present on the school mini bus used for local educational outings. Procedures for enrolling pupils for after school care are insufficiently rigorous and there are inadequate adults to meet the required levels of supervision.

Risk assessments have been undertaken for all relevant areas. Fire safety measures are good with regular fire drills held and appropriate records kept. A specialist firm undertakes regular checks on all aspects of fire safety. The electrical appliances are checked annually.

The policy for First Aid is implemented effectively, with detailed records and well stocked First Aid boxes located around the school. A high proportion of the staff are trained in First Aid.

Admission and attendance registers are kept according to current regulations.

The school has produced an appropriate accessibility plan in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

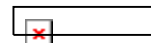
The school meets most, but not all of the requirements for registration.

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 pupils are sufficiently supervised at all times (paragraph 3(7)).*

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The school is owned by Asquith Court Schools Limited. The headteacher is accountable to the Board of Asquith Court Schools for the educational and financial management of the school. Staff have undergone appropriate checks with the Criminal Record Bureau to ensure their suitability to work with children. The school has good procedures for the recruitment of suitable teaching and non-teaching staff. References are taken up and enquiries made about their previous employment history. However, enquiries are not made about their medical history.

All teaching staff are suitably qualified and most are experienced in primary education. The school makes effective use of specialist teachers.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

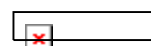
The school meets most, but not all of the requirements for registration.

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, prior to confirmation of appointment, all staff are checked for medical fitness (paragraph 4(c)).*

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school is situated in two three-storey detached houses that have been remodelled and linked by a two-storey building, containing the hall and three classrooms. The kindergarten and reception classes are in demountable buildings to the rear of the main building. Pupils move around the building safely and with sufficient access to all parts including emergency exits.

The kindergarten is just adequate in size for the current number of children, although the design (three small adjoining rooms with sliding doors connecting them) causes some restrictions in movement. A set of steps protrudes near a sliding door causing a potential health and safety hazard. The hall is extensively used for dining, assemblies, music and PE lessons. It is cluttered with furniture and lunchtime equipment that reduces the available space to a level that makes it unsafe to conduct PE lessons, especially gymnastics lessons that use large apparatus. This restricts the teaching of elements of the indoor PE curriculum.

Classrooms are generally adequate for the size of the classes. They are clean and tidy and the school is undergoing an extensive programme of redecoration. Furniture and fittings are appropriate for the ages of the pupils and much has been renewed within the last two years. The dedicated rooms for science and ICT are well equipped and contribute much to the provision in these subjects. The art room is not well maintained. The library is too small to be used for lessons but pupils do borrow from its increasingly broad range of fiction and non-fiction books. There are sufficient

washrooms and an appropriate room for pupils who are ill.

The outdoor space includes a small playground with an uneven surface that is due for renewal, a full-sized tennis court and an extensive grassed area. The small playground is used efficiently by staggering break and lunchtimes. The dedicated outdoor space for the kindergarten is just adequate in size but there is limited access to outdoor space and facilities for pupils in the reception classes.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

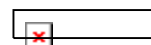
The school meets most, but not all of the requirements for registration.

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:

- *make alternative arrangements for storing furniture and dining equipment in order to increase the space available for teaching PE in the hall (paragraph 5(j)); and*
- *reduce the potential hazard to pupils' health and safety in the kindergarten by clearly marking the protruding steps (paragraph 5j).*

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school meets all of the regulations relating to the provision of information to parents. The prospectus is under review and the school has plans in place to provide current and prospective parents with an updated version in the autumn term.

Just over 40% of the parents responded to the questionnaire sent to them before the inspection. They generally expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school and agreed, almost unanimously, that their children like the school and were helped to settle in well when they started. Most parents agree that the staff expect the children to work hard and that pupils are treated fairly. Nevertheless, there were a few parents who expressed concerns and many would welcome more extra-curricular activities.

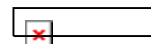
Communication between school and home is generally good, regular and mutually supportive. The "Breaside Browse", issued termly, keeps parents up to date with the life of the school, and it is written in a friendly, communicative style. Many parents support the school enthusiastically and some help with various activities. The Friends of Breaside is a very active association and organises a wide range of social events and successful fund raising activities.

The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress. Full written school reports are sent out twice a year at the end of the autumn and summer terms. These are detailed and ensure that parents are given a good range of information on their children's progress. Parents also receive regular effort and attainment grades at half-termly intervals throughout the year. Parents' evenings are held twice a year and are very well attended. Parents report that they are pleased with the progress their children make.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

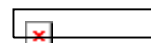


The school's complaints policy has recently been reviewed. It is detailed, well written and fully meets the requirements of the regulations. Although now available to parents on request, a significant number of parents reported that they were unaware of its existence, and the school should draw this to their attention.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	Breaside Preparatory School		
DfES ref number:	305/6004		
Type of school:	Primary		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 132,	Girls 58,	Total 190
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 27,	Girls 17,	Total 44
Annual fees (day pupils):	£6,372 per annum		
Address of school:	41 - 43 Orchard Road Bromley Kent BR1 2PR		
E-mail address:	office.breaside@lineone.net		
Telephone number:	0208 460 0916		
Fax number:	0208 466 5664		
Headteacher:	Mr Rory O'Doherty		
Proprietor:	Asquith Court Schools Limited		
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Mary Harlow HMI		
Dates of inspection:	7 - 10 June 2004		
