



Office for Standards  
in Education

## St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School

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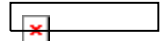
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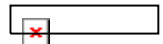
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## Introduction and summary

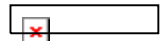


## Purpose and scope of the inspection



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.

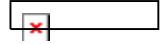
## Information about the school



St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School is located on the Lord's Roundabout and is close to Regent's Park. It is a small, co-educational, independent day school that serves the local professional and business communities. The school is non-selective. Pupils are admitted to the school at the age of three and leave at the end of Year 2. At the time of the inspection, 60 pupils were on the school's roll, including 12 who attend part-time in the nursery. Three pupils receive extra help to learn English as an additional language and one pupil has a statement of special educational need.

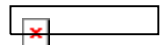
The school was founded in 1982. A new proprietor, who is also the headteacher, acquired the school in 2002. Although its central aim is to ensure that the pupils are well prepared to gain places in London public day schools when they are seven years old, the headteacher and staff strive to give pupils a balanced education. The school aims to make learning an enjoyable experience that develops the confidence and well being of individual pupils.

## Summary of main findings



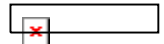
St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School is a successful school. It provides a good quality of education and the pupils make very good progress overall in English and mathematics. The curriculum is a strength of the school, having been recently developed by the new headteacher and her staff. It is a friendly and purposeful community that provides a warm welcome for pupils and adults, and safeguards their welfare very effectively.

## What the school does well



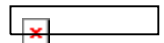
- it achieves its stated aims to enable pupils to gain admission to schools of their choice;
- the curriculum provides a good range of worthwhile activities for the pupils and is taught well;
- the school has a high regard for the welfare of its pupils and provides a secure and friendly learning environment;
- the school's leadership has been influential in promoting beneficial changes to the curriculum; and
- the school has developed a successful partnership with parents and provides a wide range of information for them.

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

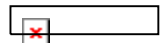


- provide separate washrooms for staff and pupils.
- **steps**
  - plan a programme of work for the pupils' personal, social and health education;
  - review the length of lessons;
  - extend the use of information and communication technology in lessons.

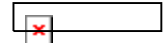
## Compliance with the regulations for registration



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



## The quality of the curriculum

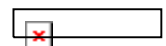


The curriculum meets all the requirements for registration. English and mathematics are its principal cornerstones and are accorded a high priority in the timetables of each class. A strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of key skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy to address the school's aim for its pupils to meet the entry requirements for London public day schools. In addition, the school strives, with considerable success, to provide a curriculum that includes a broad range of subjects and takes account of the development of the pupils' personal, social and health education. History, geography, performing and expressive arts, physical education including swimming, French and drama are all part of regular provision. A suitable amount of time is allocated to these subjects to give the pupils a good range of worthwhile experiences.

The curriculum is well planned and helps the pupils add to the skills, knowledge and understanding that they have acquired from earlier work. The school strives to provide equality of opportunity for the pupils and to cater for their individual needs. Although the number of pupils who have special educational needs is small, suitable support is given to help pupils achieve the targets in individual education plans. Policies for each subject and outlines of the content to be taught each term give teachers a secure basis for planning lessons. Much of the current documentation of the school's curriculum has been written since the headteacher's appointment and represents a significant step forward in adding to the breadth of the pupils' education.

In Key Stage 1, each subject is taught separately but, where appropriate, teachers make links between subjects to bring them to life and enhance the pupils' understanding. Visits to local places of interest provide a basis for some of the work, notably to provide a context for the pupils' writing and a stimulus for art, design and technology. For example, recent visits to the London Aquarium and the London Butterfly House resulted in written reports and colourful, closely observed representations in different media of the creatures seen. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum includes all the recommended areas of learning, and planning relates clearly to the early learning goals set for the pupils' achievement.

## The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching, particularly of key skills in English, mathematics and science, is good throughout the school. Staff are well qualified and, between them, have a broad range of experience and expertise. Teachers have a good knowledge of effective teaching methods and plan lessons well. They explain the learning objectives to help the pupils to understand the purpose of the work. Teachers know the pupils' capabilities well and provide work for them to build on their existing knowledge and to take account of their individual needs. This offers some degree of differentiated work for the pupils, especially in numeracy and literacy. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson in which pupils were learning how to establish rules to explain sequences in number, the work was pitched at a demanding level with further tasks planned for pupils who were able to complete their work quickly. In this and other lessons in English, mathematics and science, pupils demonstrated their ability to apply previous knowledge to a new situation and explain their thinking lucidly using the language of the subject correctly. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding, practise new skills and work both independently and collaboratively. For example, in a literacy lesson in a reception class, the pupils listened to the story of The Pied Piper of Hamelin; they then illustrated and wrote their own story, drawing on phonic skills previously learnt.

Teachers establish good relationships with the pupils and manage them well. They have high

expectations that the pupils will behave well and work hard. Lessons are generally conducted at a brisk pace, especially during the mornings, when most of the lessons in English and mathematics occur. While good use is made of teaching time in many lessons, some, particularly in the afternoons, are too long. Some last for an hour and 40 minutes, and tend to lose their impetus. Pupils' concentration wanes, the pace of learning slows and the impact of the teaching is reduced. Whereas in most lessons the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, occasionally, where tiredness sets in, the pupils are restless and inattentive.

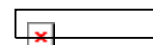
Good use is made of the available resources to give the pupils practical experiences and promote their understanding. Teachers give clear explanations and instructions that help them to tackle tasks independently. Pupils are praised for their effort and achievement; for example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 1, pupils were congratulated after 'buying' goods in the class 'shop' and giving the correct change. Although there are some displays showing the good use of the school's computers, information and communication technology is generally underused in lessons to give pupils practice in acquiring key skills.

The assessment of pupils' progress is thorough. The school uses a range of effective mechanisms to assess pupils' attainment. The Foundation Stage Profile, weekly testing of key skills and end-of-year tests all yield valuable information. The results of both standardised and national tests are recorded assiduously and used to establish a profile of each pupil's progress. Some use is made of this information to inform the planning of lessons. In most lessons, teachers use questions well to assess how well the pupils have understood new work. They give good oral feedback during lessons and pupils' work is generally well marked with helpful pointers for further improvement and with encouraging remarks.

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

Yes.

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



St John's Wood School provides well for its pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It provides a welcoming environment for the pupils, who feel happy and safe at school.

The school values each pupil as an individual and celebrates the ethnic and cultural diversity of its population. Relationships among the pupils are strong and they show respect for one another. Although it does not have a planned programme for the pupils' personal, social and health education, the school nevertheless accords a high priority to these aspects. Much of the work is implicit in the very good quality of relationships promoted by the headteacher and staff and in the tone of the school, which encourages mutual respect between adults and pupils. The teachers regularly give time in lessons, at lunchtimes and during breaks in the school day to talk informally with the pupils and listen to their views and concerns. This engenders an atmosphere of trust and gives the pupils confidence.

The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development. It has clear, unequivocal policies on bullying and behaviour that the pupils in Key Stage 1 in particular understand well. They consider that the policies are used fairly and that they are a good way of dealing with any misbehaviour. The behaviour policy provides a 'stepped' approach to resolving problems and the pupils understand that if you reach Step 3, 'you are in deep trouble!' Lunchtimes, which are used well to emphasise the importance of good table manners, provide pleasant, unhurried, social occasions and give the pupils a chance to chat with their friends during the meal. At breaks, the pupils learn the importance of drinking water and eating a healthy snack of fresh fruit. The pupils in Year 2 follow a short programme of social and moral education. The work provides

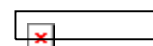
very good opportunities for them to deepen their understanding of important issues such as bullying. They learn some basic techniques for resolving conflict and apply them to everyday situations, for example when disagreements arise in the playground.

The school organises a suitable number of visits out of school with a view to broadening the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. These have included visits to places of worship, museums and a puppet theatre. Opportunities arise in the curriculum, notably through literature, music and art to add further dimensions to the pupils' cultural understanding.

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

Yes.

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



The school promotes the welfare of its pupils successfully and cares for them well. It has implemented appropriate policies to prevent bullying and to protect pupils from abuse. The headteacher is planning additional staff training on child protection in the near future.

The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy, which relates well to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) publications. The policy for First Aid is implemented effectively. Detailed records are maintained and well-stocked First Aid cupboards are located around the school. The school has recently made appropriate provision for the care of sick pupils. Personnel who have First Aid qualifications are well deployed.

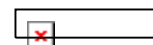
The school has devised a detailed fire risk assessment, which the fire officer has approved. There are appropriate procedures for fire evacuation and records are kept of regular fire drills. All fire equipment is checked thoroughly and electrical equipment is checked annually. The Diocese of London, on behalf of St John's Wood Church, has recently had the premises checked for asbestos and the recommendations of the specialist firm carried out. The school has prepared a well-considered document outlining their accessibility plan in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

The school's procedures to promote the pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning work well. The pupils are courteous to adults and they welcome visitors. Staff are deployed efficiently to ensure good supervision of pupils. The school keeps satisfactory written records of sanctions for the relatively rare disciplinary offences. The admission and attendance registers are maintained in line with regulations.

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

Yes.

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



The headteacher, who is also the proprietor of the school, has instituted a number of planned improvements since assuming the role in 2002. The school's curriculum has been thoroughly documented and a system of staff appraisal has been introduced recently. A school development

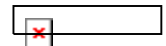
plan is under review.

All teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced in primary education and, collectively, have a good range of subject knowledge and expertise. All staff and volunteers have had appropriate checks made with the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure their suitability to work with children. Prior to appointment, candidates have had their suitability checked through evidence from their employers, character references and professional certificates. A medical fitness checklist has been put in place recently. All current staff have completed the necessary details and the form will be used for future appointments.

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

Yes.

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



The school is housed in church buildings which meet almost all the requirements for registration. Although some classrooms are small, particularly those for the pupils in Year 2, they provide adequate accommodation for the numbers of pupils on roll. The rooms used by the three classes for pupils in the Foundation Stage are given over exclusively to school use during the day, but are used by the church in the evenings and at weekends. The school copes very well with the need to move furniture and resources into storage and ensures that the pupils' education is not adversely affected. Classrooms and public areas provide eye-catching displays of the pupils' work and enhance the school's cheerful and welcoming environment. The provision of washrooms is inadequate. Although the school is exploring solutions with the church, currently the facilities are shared by pupils and adults.

The school has a small, hard-surfaced play area which, although lacking equipment and variety, provides a safe environment for play. Good use is made of the park adjacent to the school and of a local swimming pool to add further facilities to support pupils' physical development.

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

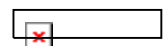
**The school meets all but one of the requirements.**

***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 separate washroom facilities for pupils and adults (paragraph 5(k)).

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



The school meets all the registration requirements relating to the provision of information for parents. The information on the school's website is attractively presented and provides a clear and simple description of the school's aims and its educational provision. The school has good arrangements for updating the website, ensuring that all details are current and correct. The school's prospectus is well presented and, along with the website version, includes all the required

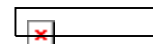
information. A 'Parents' Handbook' is an excellent addition to the information for parents and includes important and helpful details of the school's expectations and daily organisation. Communications between home and school are very good. The school's newsletters are attractively presented and provide updates on school events and successes. The school offers parents a consultation evening at the ends of the autumn and spring terms and they receive a detailed written report at the end of the summer term. Parents of pupils in Year 2 receive an additional written report at the end of the autumn term.

Parents report that they are happy with the information that they receive.

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

Yes.

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

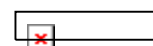


The school has devised comprehensive procedures for dealing with complaints. The majority of parents confirmed in the questionnaires that they were aware of these. A copy is made available to them in the 'Parents' handbook'.

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

Yes.

**School details**



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Name of school:	St John's Wood Pre-Preparatory School		
DfES ref number:	213/6333		
Type of school:	Pre-Preparatory		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	3-7 years		
Gender of pupils:	Boys and Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 26,	Girls 22,	Total 48
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 9,	Girls 3,	Total 12
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 0,	Girls 1,	Total 1
Annual fees (day pupils):	From £4,080 - £7,455		
Address of school:	Lord's Roundabout London NW8 7NE		
E-mail address:	school@dircon.co.uk		
Telephone number:	020 7722 7149		
Fax number:	020 7586 6093		
Headteacher:	Mrs H Ellis		
Proprietor:	Mrs H Ellis		
Lead Inspector:	Mr J H Evans		
Dates of inspection:	14 - 17 June 2004		



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