

The Roche School

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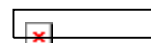
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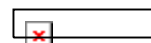
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Introduction and summary

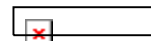


Purpose and scope of the inspection



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.

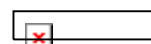
Information about the school



The Roche School opened in 1983. It is an independent, non-selective nursery and preparatory school for boys and girls aged from two and a half to eleven years of age. There are 199 pupils on roll. There are four pupils with a statement of special educational need. Two pupils have English as an additional language. The school is situated in Wandsworth and serves the local area within South London. The nursery offers education for children aged from two and a half to four years, based on the principles of Montessori education. It is registered with the Nursery Education Grant Scheme.

The school aims to 'offer children good teaching and a wide variety of opportunities' in a pleasant, homely atmosphere in which children feel free to express themselves.'

Summary of main findings



The Roche School is a successful school. It fulfils its aims in creating a very caring and happy family environment in which pupils do well. They are well motivated and develop a strong sense of mutual respect and courtesy. Academic achievement is high. The curriculum is of good quality and emphasises the development of language, literacy and numeracy skills, which are well taught. The school fully meets the regulations.

What the school does well

- pupils' high achievement enables them to move on to schools of their choice;
- the teaching is good;
- it promotes good social development and self-confidence among its pupils;
- the curriculum is good and is enhanced by a wide range of visits and extra-curricular activities; and
- pupils' benefit from learning French at an early age.

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

The school fully complies with all the regulations.

Next steps

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that the teaching of mathematics in the middle part of the school enables pupils to acquire basic mathematical concepts and make good progress in the subject.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

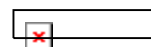
The curriculum is good. It is appropriate for the ages of the pupils at the school and meets their

Curriculum. Religious education (RE) is taught weekly and French is taught from reception year. Specialist teaching of music, physical education (PE), French, art, design and technology and dance enables pupils to achieve well in these subjects. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught weekly to pupils as a separate subject and is used effectively to support learning. All pupils have the opportunity to participate in the extensive drama and music programme. The school gives strong emphasis to the pupils' personal development through its planned programme.

Detailed schemes of work ensure suitable content and coverage of the subjects of the National Curriculum. The curriculum development team regularly reviews these. The planned actions within this review are appropriate to the school's priorities for future development. Medium-term plans are used effectively by staff to plan their weekly programme and daily lessons. The planning focuses on progression in the key skills of literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening. Curricular provision and classroom support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the entrance examinations they take for the next stage of their education. Pupils' work is further extended by the provision of homework. The nursery successfully integrates the Montessori methods of practical learning with the nationally recommended curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage.

An interesting range of educational visits further enhances pupils' learning. These have recently included visits to the theatre, museums and a Victorian house in Brighton. The school benefits from frequent visitors, which has included a parent demonstrating how to make sushi. Dance, music and sporting activities after school further extend the school curriculum. These clubs are well attended and pupils participate enthusiastically.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is good, with some being very good. Teaching is more consistently of a higher standard for the younger pupils and those at the upper end of the school. The better lessons are characterised by teachers' brisk pace, high expectations and effective questioning skills; for instance in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were able to demonstrate very good understanding of conversational text. Another feature of the most effective lessons is the teachers' strong subject knowledge. This is used effectively to take the pupils to a deeper level of learning. In less successful lessons, teachers' preparation and subject knowledge is not as thorough; this was more noticeable in mathematics in the middle years. Pupil involvement and progress is less marked in a small proportion of lessons, as is the effective use of time in some of the lengthier lessons.

Nursery staff provide good individual support to the youngest pupils. They effectively integrate a wide range of activities where pupils are enabled to share, take turns, mix socially and are especially encouraged in their speaking and listening skills. Good investigative opportunities are provided in the school. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, pupils predicted what would happen to a range of objects placed in water and then went on to check floating and sinking properties through experimentation. Specialist teachers are used effectively, for example for pupils who need additional support and in the teaching of French.

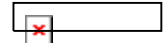
The staff know their pupils well, and relationships are very good. Pupils behave well and are motivated to learn. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their communication skills through speaking and listening in paired, group or class work. Teachers make effective use of resources, including the upgraded ICT facilities, along with classroom displays to support learning.

The school uses effective systems to assess and record pupils' progress. They are tested in the topics covered each term, and their achievement is measured against national norms. Pupils who need support with their learning are identified early and effective additional teaching is offered. Information from tests is used to inform reports to parents.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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



Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school succeeds in its aim to support its pupils in a pleasant, homely atmosphere in which they feel free to express themselves.

There are regular assemblies in which the school comes together to reflect on important aspects of life. Pupils' achievements are celebrated and religious festivals marked. There is a strong emphasis on supporting charities and helping others. Visits to local churches, links with a local primary school and occasional visits from religious leaders enhance the provision made for pupil's spiritual development.

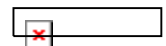
A well-planned RE syllabus enhances pupils' understanding of cultural issues. They learn of the beliefs and customs of other faiths including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism. Much of the history and geography taught supports this work and considerably deepens pupils' understanding of current affairs. For example, in Year 5, pupils are taught about 'The Partition' of India and Pakistan in 1947 and the impact on the relationship between the Hindu and Muslim communities. The headteacher develops this further in his current affairs lessons.

The school provides effectively for pupils' social and moral development. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and courtesy to which they respond positively. All Year 6 pupils are given responsibility for supervising younger pupils at break times and speak convincingly about their need to 'set a good example'. The house system encourages pupils to give of their best and to develop a team spirit. The school provides a wide range of visits and residential trips to further develop pupils' social skills and support their academic learning.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. The staff are very caring; they provide a safe and secure environment for its pupils whose welfare is given a high priority.

The school has a comprehensive range of policy documents and guidelines, which meet the registration requirements and are implemented fully. The school ensures the welfare, health and safety of its pupils with, for example, detailed risk assessments undertaken for all visits.

Appropriate records of pupils with special medical conditions or need are kept and made known to relevant staff. There are sufficient staff qualified in First Aid and a suitable room is made available. Lunchtimes are well organised. These are pleasant, social occasions where pupils eat packed lunches supervised by sufficient numbers of assistants.

The school has adopted Wandsworth Local Education Authority's child protection policy.

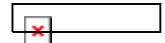
The school has made good provision for fire safety. There are regular documented drills, appliances are checked regularly and a detailed fire risk assessment has been carried out. The fire officer has confirmed that the fire safety precautions at the school are satisfactory.

The school has plans to extend the premises, which will include improved access, a toilet for the disabled and a lift and thus fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



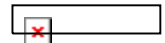
The school makes appropriate checks on staff prior to their appointment. It has been vigilant in carrying out checks with the Criminal Records Bureau on all staff. It is still awaiting the return of some of these and the relevant staff are supervised at present.

The teachers are well-qualified. There is a good range of age and experience on the staff. Effective use is made of well-qualified specialist and support staff.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The premises were originally built as a laundry in 1937. They are now suitable for use as a school. The owners have added an additional upper floor. The school is fortunate in having a spacious hall used for dining, PE, assemblies and drama. The premises are well maintained, clean and welcoming. Staff have made their classrooms and learning spaces attractive with displays of pupils' work, celebrating achievement. The classrooms are all adequate in size for the number of pupils and the furniture and fittings are suitable. The school benefits from having specialist rooms for ICT, science, special educational needs, cookery, art and design and technology. The ICT suite has recently been upgraded to a high standard and it is used effectively. There is a large hard-surfaced playground at the rear of the school. A local park is used for sports activities and a swimming pool for after-school clubs.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school provides an appropriate range of information for parents and prospective parents. An attractive prospectus contains details of curricular provision and additional activities. A range of policies is available to parents on request, including those for anti-bullying and child protection.

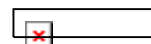
Parents receive written termly reports on their children's progress, which they are able to discuss at consultation evenings twice yearly. They are welcomed into the school when collecting their children, enabling informal meetings to take place with the class teacher, if required. A school newsletter is sent out to parents each term.

The majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire considered that they were well informed about their children's progress.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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



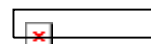
The school's complaints procedure has recently been reviewed. and meets all requirements. A copy is now distributed to new parents and made available to all on request. It clearly states the procedure to be followed, should parents wish to make a complaint.

The parents' questionnaires indicated that many are aware of the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	The Roche School		
DfES ref number:	212/6351		
Type of school:	Nursery and Preparatory		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	2-11 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 76,	Girls 95,	Total 171
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 19,	Girls 9,	Total 28
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 2,	Girls 2,	Total 4
Annual fees (day pupils):	£7,200 - £7,950		
Address of school:	11 Frogmore Wandsworth London		

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office@therocheschool.co.uk
Telephone number: 020 88770823
Fax number: 020 88751156
Headteacher: Dr J Roche
Proprietor: The Roche School Ltd
Lead Inspector: Mrs Jill Bainton
Dates of inspection: 7 - 10 February 2005

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