

The Norwegian School In London

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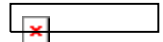
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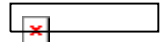
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Introduction and summary

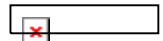


Purpose and scope of the inspection



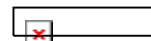
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



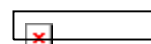
The Norwegian School in London is an independent day school for boys and girls situated about a mile from the centre of Wimbledon in the London Borough of Merton. It was established in 1982 and caters for pupils aged 2 to 16 who are drawn from Merton and the surrounding area. The majority of pupils are the children of Norwegian parents who are working or studying in London, often for relatively short periods of time. There are also children of Danish, Faroese, Icelandic and Swedish parents. At the time of the inspection there were 67 pupils on the school roll, of whom 50 were of compulsory school age. No pupils had statements of special educational need (SEN) from local education authorities, but 5 pupils had been assessed by the Norwegian Pedagogical and Psychological Educational Service as having SEN.

Summary of main findings



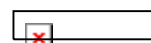
The Norwegian School in London is a good school. Its primary task is to provide pupils with an education which conforms to Norwegian educational requirements and enables them to fit back into the school system when they return to Norway. It is very successful in achieving this. However, it is also successful in providing a good educational experience for the smaller numbers of pupils from other Nordic countries. The quality of teaching is rarely less than satisfactory and it is often good or very good, and pupils are enabled to become resourceful, independent learners. They receive good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Relations throughout the school are excellent and pupils are notably poised, courteous and welcoming. All pupils and their families are known well and they give strong support to the school and its work. Teachers and pupils work together effectively and in spite of a regular turnover of both there is a sense of stability and continuity. Parents are kept well informed of what is happening at the school and through a sophisticated use of information technology can stay up to date on their children's plans.

What the school does well



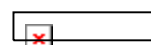
- it creates a sound and secure environment for teaching and learning for pupils from several different Nordic backgrounds and is very good at helping pupils of Norwegian background to fit back into schools in Norway;
- it is characterised by excellent relationships;
- it provides teaching which is frequently good or very good and which helps the pupils to become independent learners with the confidence to plan their own learning and access information successfully;
- it strongly encourages pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and enables them to grow into friendly, mature, confident and responsible young people; and
- it provides very full information to parents through the use of sophisticated technology.

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



- prepare and implement a written policy to safeguard the pupils in compliance with the Department for Education and Skills Circular: 'Safeguarding Children in Education' and ensure that details of this policy are made available to parents; and
- maintain the attendance registers in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995.

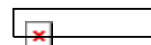
What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002



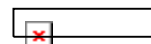
In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

- draw up a three-year plan to improve access for those with disabilities.

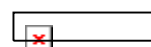
Compliance with the regulations for registration



1. The quality of education provided by the school



The quality of the curriculum



The school follows the 'Curriculum for the ten year compulsory school in Norway' which is provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. This provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is relevant to the pupils' needs and which covers all the areas of learning and subjects and complies with the required regulations. All instruction, except for that in English lessons, is given in Norwegian.

There are two departments in the school. The Barnehage (kindergarten) serves pupils aged 2 to 5, and the Grunnskole ('basic' or 'foundation' school), serving pupils aged 6 to 16 years.

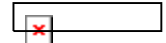
The curriculum is organised into termly plans for each of the year groups; these outline aspects of the subjects and the projects to be covered. The termly plans are further refined into weekly programmes of work from which the teachers prepare their individual lessons. However, because of the significant turnover of pupils, the school has variable knowledge about pupils' previous learning and the curriculum has to be adjusted further in individual cases in order to deliver appropriate lessons. There is very good provision for the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT). Significant use is made of this throughout the school, both for the purposes of school communication and as a tool for learning, particularly among the older pupils. The school also teaches French to the 13 to 16 year old pupils.

The school is trying to keep up-to-date with the new regulations being introduced during the present period of reforms in Norwegian schools. This will enable pupils returning to Norway to cope with them. It is also about to introduce a more formal approach to careers advice for its oldest pupils. The main emphasis is on enabling the pupils to make a smooth transition to the next stage of their education. This is because almost all of them return to Norway to continue their studies in a high school.

There are clear procedures for the provision of pupils identified as having SEN. The school is assisted in its identification of these pupils by the Norwegian Pedagogical and Psychological Educational Service, and additional resources required for these pupils are funded by the Norwegian state. The Norwegian service also helps assess those pupils who are not Norwegian, but does not provide any funding for them. Each SEN pupil has an individual education plan which identifies clearly their individual needs and how they are to be met.

The only extra-curricular activity offered to pupils at present is a weekly tennis session. It is not a feature of schools in Norway to offer the range of extra-curricular activities that would be found in many English schools.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The overall quality of the teaching is good or very good. Throughout the school there is an emphasis on encouraging pupils to participate in their own learning by planning their work in co-operation with their teachers. The result of this is that by the age of 16 most pupils have laid good foundations for becoming independent learners. In this respect they demonstrate particular strengths in their use of ICT for research and the presentation of their work.

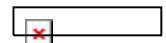
In the best lessons, teachers plan work carefully, taking into account what pupils have already learned and what further learning is appropriate. In a very good science lesson for pupils aged 10 to 13, teachers used the available time very well and included a good balance of practical and theoretical activities. Without using the terminology overtly, teachers introduced pupils to the concept of fair and objective testing by doing experiments to determine which part of the tongue responded to substances which were sour, sweet, salty or bitter. The lesson was clearly enjoyed by the pupils and reflected the excellent pupil-teacher relationships in the school. In another lesson pupils aged 8 and 9 studied the Stone Age in Norway. The teacher illustrated the lesson with well chosen artefacts and enabled the pupils to gradually build up a picture of what a typical encampment may have been like. This lesson was well planned, thoroughly prepared and contained a clear structure. The teacher explained things clearly, as a result of which pupils' interest and motivation were high and their behaviour was very good. Good links are made in the teaching between the different subjects. In one lesson, for example, links were made between art and literature, in another, mathematics and ICT. The teachers also demonstrate good subject knowledge.

Although there is no written policy document on the assessment of pupils' progress, a satisfactory range of procedures is in place and the teachers have a sound knowledge of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Pupils in Norwegian grades 4, 7 and 10 sit the recently introduced Norwegian national tests in reading, writing, mathematics and English reading and writing. In addition, there are half-yearly tests in English, mathematics and Norwegian together with various class tests. Feedback to the pupils can be oral or in written form, and the teachers meet weekly with the older pupils in order to discuss and grade their progress. The arrangements for monitoring the progress of pupils with SEN are thorough and include regular reports.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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



The 'Curriculum for the ten year compulsory school in Norway' makes clear provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school makes good use of the Norwegian national guidance and it has been successful in creating a stable and secure community in which pupils feel valued and are enabled to grow in maturity and self-understanding. That it has been able to do this, in spite of regular changes to the school population, is a tribute to the work of the staff and pupils in helping to integrate new pupils.

Although the school is primarily for Norwegian pupils, it is not mono-cultural. The Norwegian pupils come from many different parts of Norway, each of which has its own distinctive traditions, and pupils may speak either of the two Norwegian languages, Bokmål or Nynorsk. The presence of small numbers of Danish, Faroese and Icelandic pupils enable all to gain insights into wider aspects

of the Nordic cultural, linguistic, spiritual and historic tradition. All pupils share in a heritage which is culturally Christian and humanistic, but they are introduced to the beliefs and practices of other world faiths. The school has established good links with several local places of worship and a party of pupils recently visited the local Hindu mandir.

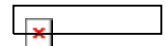
Through a well-constructed programme of curriculum enrichment, pupils are introduced to British culture and to political and social institutions. These include visits to Ironbridge Gorge, the Isle of Wight, and local visits to such places as the police station and the Houses of Parliament. The Norwegian community in London is large and active and school families are able to participate in many activities that help to strengthen their own cultural heritage. The school has established very positive links with the Norwegian Seamen's Church which helps in the provision of religious education. At the same time, pupils are encouraged to share their traditions with the local community. Recently younger pupils participated in a series of BBC radio programmes, and, as part of the celebrations of the one hundredth anniversary of Norwegian independence are preparing a presentation called 'Norway in a Nutshell'.

The Norwegian education system encourages pupils to take a democratic role in their own education. There is a pupils' council, the Elevråd, which discusses school issues and which is asked to give advice on different topics as they arise. Pupils are also encouraged to give their views on such matters as curriculum adjustments and the kind of work they want. Through a system known as Ordenselever pupils undertake daily chores on a rota basis.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school has written policies which aim to promote good behaviour, to discourage bullying and to help ensure the welfare and safety of pupils during out-of-school activities and on educational visits. There is, however, no written child protection policy or designated member of staff who has responsibility for this aspect of the pupils' welfare. The health and safety policy outlines clear and appropriate aims and procedures, and a member of staff has been appointed as the designated officer. The policy incorporates strategies for dealing with and the recording of accidents and care is taken to ensure that all staff are made aware of those pupils who require medication or have ailments. Two of the teaching staff currently hold First Aid certificates.

Fire drills are carried out regularly and logged appropriately. Fire-risk assessments are undertaken at least once a term and followed up with identified points for action. Although the admission register is kept in accordance with the regulations, the class registers are not. There is a need for a consistent approach to the appropriate recording of pupils' attendance and to ensure that a distinction is made between authorised and unauthorised absences.

The pupils conduct themselves well in and around the school, are well supervised at all times, and relationships are good. The school environment is one in which the pupils feel safe and valued as individuals. They are, for example, welcomed every morning at the school gates by the headteacher.

The school has given some consideration to access for pupils with disabilities but has not yet produced a three-year plan setting out the improvements made or intended.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school does not yet fully comply with 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:

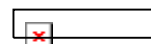
- prepare and implement a written policy to safeguard the pupils in compliance with the Circular DfES/0027/2004: Safeguarding Children in Education' (paragraph 3(2)(b)); and
- maintain the attendance registers in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (paragraph 3(9)).

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

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

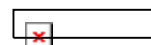


The school is a registered charitable trust and has a board of governors consisting of three people, but the day-to-day responsibility for running the school is in the hands of the headteacher. Teaching staff are all appropriately qualified and experienced. British members of staff have been checked according to Criminal Record Bureau procedures. Norwegian nationals working at the school are appointed in Norway and are automatically checked by way of Norwegian police procedures.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school provides appropriate accommodation. It is housed in a large Victorian mansion which has been extended over the years. There are four main class bases, rooms for the specialist teaching of subjects such as science, ICT and home economics and a hall used for weekly assemblies. There is a spacious library, and several smaller rooms are used for the teaching of small groups or individuals. All the rooms are well decorated, with good heating and lighting and the furniture is appropriate to the ages and size of the pupils. There are, in addition, several administrative offices. All the accommodation is in a tidy, clean and hygienic state.

There are sufficient toilets and hand washing facilities for the number of pupils. There are satisfactory arrangements for using a room for pupils who are unwell. The school has given some consideration as to how the building may be adapted in order to provide access to any pupils with disabilities. Toilet facilities for the disabled have been included in one of the extensions.

The grounds cover an acre of gardens and provide good outside space for the numbers of pupils on roll. There are two adventure playgrounds, both of which have appropriate, safe landing surfaces. In

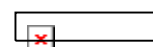
addition there is a play area for the nursery, including a sandpit, a grassed area and a spacious hard-surfaced area where sports such as tennis and basketball are played. The school has no indoor facilities for physical education and rents venues for different activities such as swimming, badminton, athletics, tennis and skating.

The general school environment is enhanced by a variety of displays which reflect the pupils' work and celebrate their achievements.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school has very thorough systems for providing information to parents. It makes use of a conventional paper-based system as well as of sophisticated electronic technology. At the time of the inspection, the school was in the process of reprinting its prospectus, but it has in place an electronic system which provides relevant information to parents both about the school in general and about their own individual children's plans. Such information does not yet include the school's child protection policy. An internet-based learning management system, to which each family has its own individual password, enables them to see relevant information about general issues including details of the curriculum and a weekly newsletter written by the headteacher. Parents can also access specific information about their children's learning programme. The headteacher's weekly newsletter is also available in paper form and is prominently displayed on the school notice boards. The agendas and meetings of the school's co-operative council (Samarbeidsutvalg) and of the board of governors are published in the same way.

At the beginning of each term there is a joint meeting for all the parents, as well as special class meetings. These meetings address matters of interest concerning the plans of the school or individual classes, and they enable parents to ask questions about the school's current programme.

In addition to the electronic information available for individual pupils, parents of pupils in Years 9 to 11 receive report cards each month on which details of conduct, organisation and behaviour are recorded. There are also parent-teacher conferences at least twice a year by which parents are kept informed of how their children are faring. These may take place more often if required.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

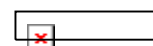
The school meets all but one of the requirements.

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:

- make available to parents and prospective parents particulars of its policy relating to child protection (paragraph 6(2)(h)).

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

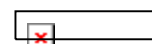


The school makes use of the standard procedures that are in place in Norway and adheres to the regulations that accompany them. These regulations cover complaints by both parents and pupils and may concern general matters, complaints about pupils' grades, or their psychological, social and physical work environment. The procedures are clearly understood and are very thorough. The school recognises that it also needs to have in place a set of procedures that conform to English regulations and has, accordingly, prepared a Norwegian version of these. They meet all the requirements and are currently being discussed by the governing body.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	The Norwegian School In London		
DfES ref number:	315/6072		
Type of school:	Foreign Language all age school		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	2 - 16 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 38,	Girls 30,	Total 68
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 3,	Girls 2,	Total 5
Annual fees (day pupils):	£8,000 - £8,600		
Address of school:	28 Arterberry Road Wimbledon London SW20 8AH		
E-mail address:	mail@dnslondon.com		
Telephone number:	0208 947 6617		
Fax number:	0208 944 7345		
Headteacher:	Mrs Kirsti H Jacobsen		
Proprietor:	The Norwegian School in London		
Lead Inspector:	Dr Roy Long		
Dates of inspection:	10 - 13 January 2005		

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