

Parkgate House School

CONTENTS

[Introduction and summary](#)

[Purpose and scope of the inspection](#)

[Information about the school](#)

[Summary of main findings](#)

[What the school does well](#)

[What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations](#)

[Next steps](#)

[Compliance with the regulations for registration](#)

[1. The quality of education provided by the school](#)

[The quality of the curriculum](#)

[The quality of the teaching and assessment](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[6. The quality of information for parents and other partners](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

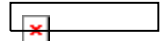
[7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

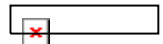
[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[School details](#)

Introduction and summary

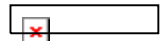


Purpose and scope of the inspection



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.

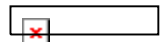
Information about the school



Parkgate House School is a privately owned non-selective school catering for boys and girls aged 2½ to 11 years. At the time of the inspection there were 199 pupils on roll. The main school is accommodated in an impressive Georgian Grade 2 listed building overlooking Clapham Common in south west London. The school is organised into three departments. The nursery caters for the two and a half to four year olds, the pre-preparatory department for those aged four to seven and the preparatory department for the seven to eleven age range.

The main aim of the school is to know each child well, and through a 'nurturing environment' it emphasises the importance of individual excellence, be it academic, artistic or sporting. Last year, all of the Year 6 pupils gained places at independent secondary schools.

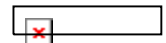
Summary of main findings



Parkgate House School is a very good school with a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and an attractive learning environment. It values its pupils as individuals and makes a very positive contribution to the development of their self-esteem and confidence. Consequently, they are extremely well behaved, polite and courteous and leave the school as confident and articulate young people who achieve well.

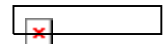
The school is effectively organised and offers a well planned, broad and balanced curriculum which is supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The quality of the teaching is often very good, and there are very good relationships between adults and pupils.

What the school does well



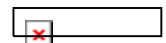
- it provides an attractive, well-organised learning environment and fosters good relationships with its parents;
- it gives a very high priority to pupils' welfare, health and safety;
- it provides a carefully planned curriculum supported by good procedures for assessment and record keeping;
- it offers, overall, very good, quality teaching provided by knowledgeable class-based and specialist teachers; and
- it makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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



- carry out checks to confirm the medical fitness of all staff prior to their appointment to the school; and
- include in its complaints procedure provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed according to the regulations outlined in section 7 of this report.

Next steps



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

- improve further the very good assessment practice through the introduction of individual pupil targets to support teaching and learning; and
- review the use of worksheets, particularly in the humanities.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The school provides a very good quality curriculum for all its pupils. The nursery curriculum is based on the six areas of learning together with French, music and dance lessons. They are introduced to information and communication technology (ICT) in their second year. In the pre-preparatory classes the subjects of the National Curriculum are introduced, with further studies in French, and the introduction of ballet. Preparatory pupils continue with this curriculum, study Latin and classics, and have lessons in horse-riding for part of the year. Music throughout the school includes singing and percussion. From pre-preparatory onwards, there are opportunities for individual tuition in a range of instruments, including, piano, violin, trumpet and guitar. Swimming, gymnastics and indoor sports are taught at a local leisure centre, whilst outdoor sports, for example football, rugby, and hockey take place on Clapham Common. There is good provision for the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE) as well as religious education (RE).

Careful attention is given to time allocation in the various subjects to ensure that pupils of all ages are taught the basic skills of literacy and numeracy within a broad and balanced curriculum. Written policies are clear, succinct and comprehensive, and include, for example, guidance on assessment and record keeping. There is a separate policy for teaching and learning which is helpful to teachers, and is reviewed regularly. Policies on special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL) give teachers effective guidance on meeting individual pupils' needs. Where appropriate, the Code of Practice for SEN is followed. Teachers' planning is very good. It is detailed and uses National Curriculum and other government guidance to ensure that the lessons have clear objectives, and build upon what has been learned previously. In addition, curriculum provision is supported by a range of published schemes. These are often accompanied by worksheets which are, on occasions, over used. However, good links are made between the subjects. In science for example, studies of plant life included the work of artists such as Cezanne, Monet and William Morris. Similarly, excellent links are made between drama and history.

The curriculum is enriched by a well-established after-school programme which includes art, drama, gymnastics, yoga, golf and choir. In addition there are special activity weekends and 'holiday academies', such as a recent activities week when experienced and well qualified coaches taught skills across a range of sports.

The quality of the teaching and assessment

The quality of the teaching is often very good. A particular feature of the school is its extensive use of specialist teachers, in all year groups. These teachers take French, music, physical education (PE) including swimming, drama, art, ICT and ballet. In Key Stage 2 specialists also teach English,

mathematics and horse riding, as well as Latin and classics. In addition, there is a teacher for pupils who have been identified as having SEN., and are withdrawn from some lessons for extra support. This emphasis on the use of specialist teachers makes a positive contribution to the quality of the teaching. Communication is good between all members of staff and they demonstrate confident knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They have appropriately high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and extension work is prepared for higher attaining pupils.

All lessons are carefully planned with clear learning objectives and good quality resources. Basic literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge are taught well to all age groups. Questioning is used to very good effect to check the pupils' progress and understanding. A strength of many of the lessons is the high quality of discussions between the teachers and pupils. These are based on very good relationships, pupils who are confident and articulate and teachers who have a comprehensive knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individuals. There is a good pace to most lessons, and in the best there are carefully planned plenary sessions which review pupils' achievement of the learning objectives. In a few lessons, the management of the pupils' tasks needs to be more tightly controlled by the teacher. All of the classrooms are organised effectively and present attractive learning and working environments.

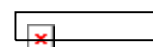
The teaching programme is supported by homework, expectations of which are communicated to the parents who are seen as vital partners in their children's learning.

The quality of assessment and record keeping is very good and a strength of the school. The procedures are regularly monitored. Lessons are planned around key objectives which are clearly stated and become the focus for subsequent assessment. The quality of the marking is very good, providing regular and helpful feedback to pupils. Teachers use common formats for the recording of the pupils' progress. Pupils are tested regularly, and the results analysed to identify individual and whole-class strengths and weaknesses. The outcomes of these analyses are used effectively to inform the planning of subsequent lessons. Pupils take end-of-year Key Stage 1 national and optional tests, as well as other standardised tests in English and mathematics. In addition, teachers devise their own tests and, where appropriate, the oldest pupils sit entrance examinations for independent secondary or grammar schools.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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



The school makes excellent provision for pupils moral and social development and very good provision for their spiritual and cultural development. There are regular weekly assemblies when the pupils develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions. Aspects of RE are covered in topic work and in English, ICT and PSHE. The school also celebrates events in the Christian calendar.

A major part of the assembly programme is based on the school's 'Virtues Project,' which is used to support the teaching of moral development. Virtues such as kindness, determination and understanding are identified on a weekly basis as the focus of not only assemblies, but also RE and PSHE lessons. In addition, curriculum planning identifies opportunities to reinforce these themes in other lessons. Pupils learn the difference between right and wrong and are very tolerant and understanding of each other. An awareness of the plight of those less fortunate than themselves is fostered, for example through the pupils' participation in international relief organisations such as "The Samaritan's Purse".

Pupils' behaviour in and around the school and in lessons is exemplary and they are actively encouraged to play a positive role in contributing to the life of the school and the wider community. They take part in presentations, play musical instruments and sing and perform at special parent assemblies. A house system helps develop the pupils' sense of responsibility and team spirit. A clear PSHE policy aims to develop pupils' self-esteem and encourage them to make choices regarding personal and social issues. These aims are underpinned by a set of school rules and a code of behaviour displayed in all classrooms. In addition, there is a clear and comprehensive school behaviour and discipline policy. This helps promote good relationships so that all concerned work together in an effective and considerate way. The behaviour policy also incorporates guidance on rewards and punishments and outlines the roles and responsibilities of pupils, parents and staff.

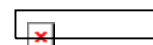
There are very good opportunities for the pupils to develop their cultural awareness. Aspects of art, history, science and music are presented in the monthly parents' assemblies by both the pupils and guest speakers. The pupils make visits to various museums and places of interest as well as to residential centres. Those in Years 4 and 6 correspond, in French, with pupils in France.

The pupils are helped to understand life in a multicultural society by learning about the major faiths and other cultures. During the inspection for example, the pupils studied aspects of Hinduism and the Chinese New Year.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is excellent and given a very high priority by the school. Well-written and comprehensive policies are implemented and reviewed regularly. These include an anti-bullying policy and detailed and comprehensive guidance on behaviour and discipline. Appropriate reference has been made to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance. Opportunities are taken in lessons to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of health, safety and welfare issues, for example during circle time where they can discuss their fears and worries.

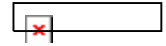
The daily routines of school life are very well-established and contribute to a safe working environment. Pupils negotiate the steps and staircases in the building sensibly and safely. They are looked after carefully when sick or if they have been involved in an accident and a proper record is kept of such occurrences. There are First Aid boxes at strategic locations throughout the building and six members of staff hold current First Aid certificates. The arrangements for out-of-school visits give careful consideration to the pupils' safety. The school's child protection policy outlines clear procedures should there be concerns about a pupil's welfare. It also states that the school's named person will work closely with the authorities in the event of any allegations of abuse.

There has been a recent fire risk assessment after which the few points identified for action were speedily addressed. Regular fire-drills are carefully recorded in a log book. The school is fulfilling its duties under the Discrimination and Disability Act 2002 and is clear about its duties and commitments with regard to any prospective pupils who may have disabilities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The headteacher and staff are appropriately qualified and offer a wide range of experience and expertise to teach the curriculum. Checks with the Criminal Records Bureau have been, or are in the process of being, carried out on all members of staff to confirm their suitability to work with children. The school is very effectively organised by the proprietor and the senior staff, with the support of an efficiently run office. There is a very helpful staff handbook which gives guidance on the day-to-day running of the school.

Procedures are in place to check on the previous employment history, as well as character and professional qualifications of prospective staff, prior to their appointment. The school does not always ensure that medical checks are undertaken.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

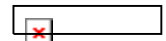
No.

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:

- carry out checks to confirm the medical fitness of all staff prior to their appointment to the school (paragraph 4(c)).

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



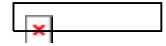
The premises and accommodation are suitable for their purpose. Both staff and pupils appreciate their surroundings which provide a very pleasant learning environment. The buildings are well furnished, clean and warm. All classrooms and teaching areas are spacious, with furniture which is suitable for the age range of the pupils. There are particularly good quality displays in classrooms and around the school, and materials and equipment are stored neatly.

The main building is early Georgian. It has good proportions and is light and airy. A redeveloped coach house provides nursery classrooms and specialist music facilities. Further specialist accommodation exists for art, and there is a well-equipped ICT suite which also houses a library. The playground for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils is small but adequate. The nursery play area has a good range of outdoor equipment, a safety surface and a small garden bed with containers for plants and flowers. The lack of a hall for whole-school assemblies and concerts is a limitation, although good arrangements have been made for these to take place at the nearby Battersea Arts Centre.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



Relationships with parents are very good and are an important part of the life of the school. This is demonstrated by the very positive response from parents to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Ninety eight per cent of those that replied reported that they are well informed about their children's progress, and feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem.

Parents receive written reports on their children's progress several times a year, and there are termly consultation evenings when they have an opportunity to discuss the pupils' work. In addition, there is informal communication between parents and staff on a daily basis. They are also invited to a monthly assembly and an annual awards ceremony. Some visit the school as guest speakers to contribute their own experiences and expertise to the pupils' studies of school topics.

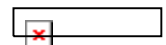
There is a well presented school brochure that includes an outline of the school's aims, an overview of the curriculum and other relevant information. Parents also receive additional information when their child is admitted to the school. Both the brochure and the school's website are in the process of being reviewed and rewritten.

There is an active parent-teacher association (PTA) which meets termly. Its main function is to organise social events and to raise funds for extra facilities and equipment for the school as well as for local charities. Each class is represented on the PTA by one of the parents.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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



A written complaints procedure is in place. This document meets almost all of the requirements, has clear aims. It emphasises the importance of good relationships between pupils, parents and staff. Procedures to be followed in the event of an informal or formal complaint as well as time scales are explained, and confidentiality is guaranteed. However, provision is not included for the establishment of a hearing before a panel, if parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

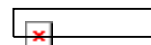
No.

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 for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor if parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint (paragraphs 7(f) to paragraph 7(i)).

School details



Name of school:	Parkgate House School		
DfES ref number:	212/6397		
Type of school:	Nursery and Preparatory		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	2½ to 11 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 55,	Girls 76,	Total 131
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 30,	Girls 38,	Total 68
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 0,	Girls 0,	Total 0
Annual fees (day pupils):	£4,500 - £8,310		
Address of school:	Parkgate House 80 Clapham Common Northside London SW4 9SD		
E-mail address:	anyname@parkgate-school.co.uk		
Telephone number:	0207 350 2452		
Fax number:	0207 738 1633		
Headteacher:	Miss C M Shanley		
Proprietor:	Miss C M Shanley		
Lead Inspector:	Mr Ken Morgan		
Dates of inspection:	21 - 24 February 2005		

© Crown copyright 2005. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced verbatim without adaptation, and the source and date of publication are stated.
Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

