

# Pointer School

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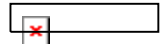
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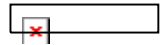
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**Introduction and summary**

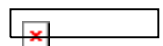


**Purpose and scope of the inspection**



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**

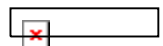


The Pointer School is a long established non-selective school for boys and girls between three and eleven years of age. It occupies a large double-fronted detached Victorian house in a residential area adjacent to Blackheath Common near Greenwich. There are 166 pupils on roll, of whom 125 are of compulsory school age or over.

The school is not linked to any particular religious denomination or foundation but describes itself as a 'Christian school in the evangelical tradition', teaching the Christian faith by 'word, song and example'. There are both early morning (breakfast) and late afternoon school facilities for the children of those parents or carers who work full-time.

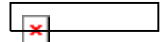
The proprietor of the school is also its headteacher. He is supported in his management role by a deputy headteacher and a head of nursery.

**Summary of main findings**



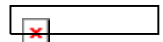
This is a happy and successful school. It is effectively led and managed; teachers and support staff work well as a team. The good relationships are based on mutual respect and a strong community spirit built upon Christian principles. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and the range of extra-curricular activities is a particularly good feature. The teaching is satisfactory overall and is often good or very good. Pupils are confident, well motivated and usually make good progress.

### What the school does well



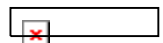
- it offers a broad and balanced curriculum and a very good range of extra-curricular activities;
- it provides lessons which are well planned, have clear objectives and use a good range of resources;
- it provides an attractive, well organised learning environment;
- it gives very good attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ; and
- it maintains a harmonious and hardworking ethos.

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



- ensure that all cleaning materials are kept in a locked cupboard; and
- check that pupils are appropriately attired when caring for the school aviary.

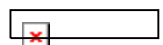
### Next steps



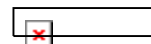
Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that the activities planned for lessons offer sufficient challenge for all of the pupils; and
- develop a more consistent approach to assessing pupils' progress throughout the school.

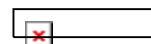
### Compliance with the regulations for registration



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



### The quality of the curriculum



The curriculum is well organised, and underpinned by very clearly written policies, plans and schemes of work. It is broad, balanced, relevant to the pupils' needs, and provides opportunities to promote their knowledge and understanding in all the subjects of the National Curriculum. Religious education (RE) and information and communication technology (ICT) are taught weekly, and there is a programme covering personal, social and health education (PSHE), including aspects of citizenship. French is taught throughout both key stages, whilst German is introduced at the beginning of Key Stage 2.

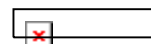
The written schemes of work for all of the subjects make good use of appropriate national publications, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and those provided by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority. They also ensure coverage of the National Curriculum, and place appropriate emphasis on the development of skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. The clearly written medium-term plans are used effectively by the staff for the planning of individual lessons. Opportunities are also provided for pupils to make links between some of the subjects. The curriculum is consolidated and extended by a clearly structured homework policy.

Pupils in the early years classes follow the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance. This provides a very good range of appropriate activities covering the nationally recommended six areas of learning. It also offers a very good balance between activities led by the teachers and those where the pupils work more independently.

The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These take place after school on a daily basis and include drama, cookery, board games and various sports. Pupils also take part in a range of appropriate educational visits.

There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN). However, the school implements the Code of Practice, and draws up individual education plans containing clear targets for learning for those pupils whose needs have been identified by staff.

### The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and is often good or very good.

All lessons are well planned, structured and resourced. They are based on good quality medium-term planning. Many of the lessons begin with good revision and consolidation of previous learning. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and indicate clearly the main objectives of the lessons. In most lessons the teaching allows for varying abilities within the class, but on occasions there is insufficient challenge in the work for some of the pupils. The teachers employ a good range of teaching strategies. They teach the class as a whole, as well as encouraging the pupils to work individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Classroom assistants are effectively deployed and make positive contributions to the teaching.

The teachers make good links between subjects, for example, in the use of word processing to present written work. In one class, the teacher made good use of graphs to illustrate pupils' preferences after tasting a range of Indian food. The pupils work well together, demonstrate a high level of interest and usually make good progress. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good.

A good policy on the induction of new staff provides for a preliminary visit to the school prior to appointment and a timetable of induction meetings and reviews when the teacher has joined the staff. All teachers are appraised annually with regular review meetings and the observation of at least two of their lessons, which helps improve their quality and effectiveness. There is a clear allocation of phase and subject responsibilities and all staff have a job description. Priorities for whole-school improvement are identified in a helpful annual development plan.

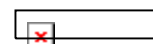
Teachers use an appropriate range of assessment strategies but there is not a written policy to encourage consistency across the school. All pupils of compulsory school age sit the end of key stage national tests, and cognitive ability tests are administered throughout Key Stage 2. The progress of the younger pupils is recorded in the Foundation Stage profile. Teachers also maintain a tracker sheet which records pupils' coverage of the key objectives of all National Curriculum subjects. In addition, teachers devise their own tests and make use of other published material.

There are some good examples of teachers' observation and recording of pupils' progress. Good use is also made of individual work targets for pupils in order to help improve their learning. All the pupils' work is marked regularly with some good examples of written feedback in the exercise books. These comments help the pupils to progress toward the next stage of learning.

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

Yes.

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



The school ethos is based on Christian principles, and this contributes to the very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. All pupils attend assemblies which include Christian worship and prayers, and a consideration of spiritual and moral issues. This includes time to think of others within and beyond the school. This term, pupils are donating 'shoe box gifts' to disadvantaged children in countries in Eastern and Central Europe. Teachers' lesson planning includes themes such as 'forgiveness' and 'being committed to a cause'.

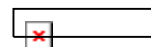
Pupils' social development is encouraged by their undertaking a range of responsibilities, both in the classroom and around the school. The pupils take turns to be a form captain or nursery leader to help the teacher, for example in preparing or tidying up resources. They also help by showing new parents around school or distributing programmes at concerts and sports days.

Very good attention is also given to pupils' knowledge and understanding of other religions and cultures, for example, Hinduism and the celebration of Divali. Arrangements are made for pupils to visit places of worship of other religions. Pupils' cultural development is supported by trips to local theatres and museums and visits to the school by story tellers and organisers of science workshops.

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

Yes.

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



The school responds very positively to issues concerning pupils' health, welfare and safety. All written policies take account of national guidance. These policies aim to promote good behaviour, to prevent bullying, and to alert all adults to important issues such as child protection and welfare and safety during out-of-school activities and on educational visits. There is a designated health and safety officer whose responsibilities, like all of those with supervisory duties, are made clear. Accident procedures are outlined and all incidents are recorded. Three of the teaching staff hold current First Aid certificates.

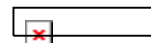
Fire drills are carried out regularly and logged appropriately. Annual fire-risk assessments are undertaken and followed up with identified points for action. Admission and attendance registers are kept according to current regulations. The school has drawn up a written policy which considers and reviews accessibility for pupils who may have a disability.

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.

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

Yes.

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

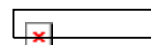


The school is appropriately staffed for the teaching of the curriculum. Teachers are well qualified, and there are teaching assistants in reception and Key Stage 1. Recruitment procedures ensure that thorough checks are made on previous employment history, character and medical background. In addition, appropriate Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearances are obtained on all those who have contact with pupils.

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

Yes.

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



The school is housed mainly in a four-storied Victorian building which is suitable for its purpose. A small, demountable structure accommodates two of the classrooms; the other seven classes are in the main building. All classrooms are appropriate in size for the current numbers of pupils. They are maintained in good order, and are, overall, suitably furnished. There are specialist areas for the teaching of music and ICT. In addition, there is a small multi-purpose hall used for assemblies,

lunches and, on occasions, for the teaching of the youngest pupils.

A small kitchen provides hygienic facilities for the preparation of food. There are appropriate washrooms for both pupils and staff. Good consideration has been given to how the buildings could be adapted for pupils with disabilities.

To the front of the building is a small car park and arrangements are in hand to construct iron gates across the main entrance, which fronts a very busy road. There is a well-planned hard-surfaced playground to the rear of the building which makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development and learning. It is in good repair, and contains a selection of trees and large potted shrubs, and markings for games. Other facilities include a covered sandpit, an aviary, an adventure playground with an appropriate safety surface, and a wooden play house. As there is no grassed area within the school grounds, the pupils are transported to a local leisure centre for the teaching of physical education and games including swimming.

The use of certain parts of the building needs to be reviewed with regard to pupils' health and safety. It is essential that cleaning fluids are kept in a locked cupboard. In addition, pupils need to be appropriately attired when looking after the school aviary.

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?***

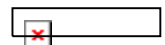
The school meets all but one of the requirements.

### ***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:

- ensure that all cleaning materials are kept in a locked cupboard (paragraph 5(j)); and
- check that all pupils are appropriately attired when caring for the school aviary (paragraph 5(j)).

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



There is a good range of information for parents. They are encouraged to take an interest in all aspects of their children's education. Attractively presented literature includes an illustrated school brochure, parents' handbook and regular newsletters.

A particularly good feature of the parents' handbook is the guidance given on how parents can support the development of their children's early literacy skills.

Parents receive clear and well written information about the background and philosophy of the school, its curriculum, routines and procedures. There are useful notes on the school's policies for pupils with SEN and English as an additional language. Various notice boards in and around the school provide helpful information about events and projects. The Parents' Association has recently held fund raising events to purchase computers for the school.

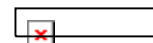
Parents receive comprehensive information about their children's progress in termly reports which give a clear picture of personal, social and academic achievement. These are complemented by

parent-teacher interviews held in the autumn and spring terms. Nearly 80% of parents returned the inspection questionnaire; a large majority expressed satisfaction with the information they receive 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**

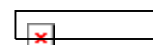


There is a written complaints policy which meets all the requirements for registration, although a significant minority of parents who returned the inspection questionnaires were unaware of, or unclear about, the procedures. The policy sets out clear responsibilities and time-scales and ensures that, where needed, a complaint is investigated and considered by an appropriately appointed panel. A complaints officer monitors the implementation of the procedure and reviews its effectiveness annually.

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

Yes.

**School details**



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Name of school:	Pointer School		
DfES ref number:	203/6065		
Type of school:	Primary & Nursery		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 88,	Girls 78,	Total 166
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 0,	Girls 0,	Total 0
Annual fees (day pupils):	£6336		
Address of school:	19 Stratheden Road Blackheath London SE3 7TH		
E-mail address:	secretary@pointers-school.co.uk		
Telephone number:	0208 293 1331		
Fax number:	0208 293 1331		
Headteacher:	Mr R J S Higgins		
Proprietor:	Mr R J S Higgins		
Lead Inspector:	Mr Gordon Turner		
Dates of inspection:	15 - 18 November 2004		

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