

Wetherby Preparatory School

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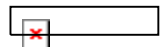
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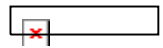
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Introduction and summary

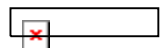


Purpose and scope of the inspection



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.

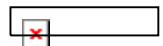
Information about the school



Wetherby Preparatory School opened in September 2004. It is an independent, selective preparatory school for boys aged eight to thirteen years of age. Currently the school operates with two classes totalling 24 boys aged eight and nine, with a further two classes joining in September 2005. The school occupies a recently refurbished period building in Notting Hill, London.

The school aims to *'develop and nurture the individual, and prepare boys, confidently, for the next step in their education.'*

Summary of main findings



Wetherby Preparatory School has made a good start. It is well organised and provides a caring and happy atmosphere where pupils develop self-respect and confidence. It is succeeding in its aim of developing and nurturing the individual and pupils are developing a strong sense of mutual respect and courtesy. The teaching has many good features and the curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. Teachers know their pupils very well and relationships are very positive at all levels.

What the school does well

- it succeeds in its aim by providing a caring environment where pupils are valued as individuals;
- it ensures the very good behaviour of pupils;
- it provides a good breadth of educational experiences and opportunities; and
- it enhances the curriculum with a range of educational visits.

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

- improve the aspects of the premises recorded in section 5.

Next steps

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

- improve the daily planning by making clear the learning intentions; and
- ensure that marking helps pupils to improve their work.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The school makes good curricular provision which meets the pupils' needs. It gives them opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding in all subjects of the National Curriculum. Religious education (RE), French and Latin are taught weekly. Computer skills are

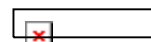
used effectively to support learning. There is an emphasis on English, mathematics and reasoning throughout the school in preparation for Common Entrance exams. The school stresses the importance of the pupils' personal development through its planned programme.

Detailed schemes of work have been devised which ensure suitable content and coverage of the subjects of the National Curriculum. There are plans to review the curriculum to meet the needs of the boys as the school expands with all year groups. Medium-term plans are used effectively for weekly programmes and daily lessons, although the daily planning is not sufficiently specific about learning intentions. The planning focuses on progression in the key skills of literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening.

Curricular and classroom support for pupils who need additional help is very good. Pupils' work is further extended by the provision of homework, which is carefully monitored by staff.

An interesting range of educational visits further enhances pupils' learning. These have included the Science Museum, the Wallace Collection and the British Museum. The pupils have already benefited from several visitors, among them a Chinese theatre company and a Roman enactment group. Sporting, computer and art activities after school further extend the curriculum.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is good. The staff are well qualified. They have a good range of experience and effective use is made of specialists to teach physical education (PE), music, ICT, Latin and French. The best teaching is well matched to pupils' differing abilities and provides them with good levels of challenge, which enable them to make progress at an appropriate rate. Where teaching is satisfactory, work is not always matched effectively to pupils' ability. On occasions learning intentions are insufficiently clear and the lesson is not closely matched to pupils' needs.

Classroom routines are securely established and underpin the positive learning atmosphere. Teachers know their pupils very well and relationships are very good. Pupils appreciate this and all find their lessons enjoyable which contributes to the school's good ethos. They feel that their teachers take great care to help them. In a good art and design lesson, for example, pupils thoroughly enjoyed designing a chair and had the opportunity to work collaboratively and share ideas.

Attractive displays enhance pupils' work and encourage them to feel that it is valued. Resources are good throughout the school and are used effectively to support learning. Staff use ICT effectively to support their teaching through the use of the interactive whiteboards in the classrooms.

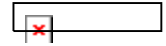
Those who find learning difficult are given very good help by an experienced learning support teacher. She works closely with parents and class teachers, and pupils are making good progress.

The school is in the early stages of formulating assessment procedures. Pupils are tested regularly in spelling and reading and they take exams in the main subjects at the end of the autumn and summer terms. The staff mark the pupils' work regularly but on occasions the marking is not sufficiently constructive in helping the pupils to develop accuracy and improve their work.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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



Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for effectively by the school. There is a welcoming, caring environment and pupils feel happy at the school. They feel valued and known very well individually.

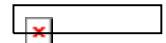
Pupils behave very well in and around the school. Relationships are very good at all levels with pupils playing happily together at break times. Lunchtimes, which are used effectively to emphasise the importance of good table manners, provide pleasant social occasions and give pupils a chance to chat with friends during the meal. There are four houses in the school, house points are awarded for effort and good work. House captains will be appointed once the school has grown. Pupils understand and support the school rules as they helped to formulate them. During their time at the school pupils are developing a strong sense of self worth and are growing in confidence. They learn to respect others and become valued members of the school community.

The school organises many suitable visits outside school with a view to broadening the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. They study world religions in RE and have recently celebrated Chinese New Year with the help of a Chinese theatre company. Opportunities arise in the curriculum 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 makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. There are clear written policies to prevent bullying and to encourage good behaviour amongst the pupils, who behave very well. Staff are alert to issues such as child protection. Pupils are closely supervised at all times on the school premises.

The school has effective procedures to ensure fire safety. These include regular testing of all appliances, termly fire drills that are accurately documented and a satisfactory report from the fire officer. A specialist firm has carried out a fire risk assessment. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken for all visits. The importance of pupils' welfare and safety on educational visits is given a high priority.

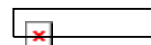
Several staff are trained in First Aid. Well-stocked First Aid boxes are located where needed and accidents are recorded. The admission and attendance registers are kept according to current regulations. Attendance is very good.

The school has produced an accessibility plan to show how it will fulfil its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

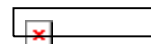


The school is owned by the Alpha Plus Group which owns several schools in the locality. All staff have appropriate checks to ensure their suitability to work with children. Prior to appointment staff have their professional expertise checked through evidence from previous employers, character references and professional qualifications.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school occupies refurbished Grade II listed, period premises, which have been finished to a very high standard and are attractive and welcoming. Effective use is made of all five floors to provide specialist accommodation for music, science, learning support, library, design and technology, art, craft and ICT. There is a spacious hall and the art room is also used as the dining room. The classrooms are well equipped with suitable furniture and fittings. Interactive whiteboards are situated in each classroom, the science and ICT suites. Staff have made the learning areas attractive with displays of pupils' work, celebrating achievement.

Floor to ceiling windows in the first floor classroom open onto a balcony with a low balustrade. The school has taken steps to minimise this risk and is seeking a permanent solution which complies with listed building regulations. Temporary arrangements for pupils who may be ill do not meet the regulations, in so far as running water is not provided in the sick room.

There is a good-sized playground with a soft play surface at the rear of the school. A local sports centre and swimming pool are used for PE activities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

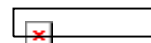
The school meets most but not all of the requirements.

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:

- restrict balcony access to ensure that all classrooms comply with health and safety regulations (paragraph 5(j)); and
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school produced an initial prospectus before it opened last year and is currently updating this to include all the recent developments. Meanwhile they provide an appropriate range of information for parents and prospective parents. A parents' file contains a range of policies, which is available on request.

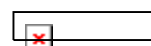
Parents receive detailed written reports termly on their children's progress, which they are able to discuss at consultation evenings twice yearly. They are welcomed into the school when collecting their children, enabling informal meetings to take place. Well-presented and informative newsletters are sent out regularly to parents.

The majority of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

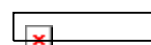


The school's complaints procedure meets all the requirements. A copy has recently been distributed to all parents. It clearly states the procedures to be followed, should parents wish to make a complaint.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



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| Name of school: | Wetherby Preparatory School | | |
| DfES ref number: | 207/6403 | | |
| Type of school: | Preparatory | | |
| Status: | Independent | | |
| Age range of pupils: | 8 - 13 years (Currently 8 - 9 years) | | |
| Gender of pupils: | Boys | | |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils): | Boys 24, | Girls , | Total 24 |
| Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need: | Boys 0, | Girls , | Total 0 |
| Annual fees (day pupils): | £10,500 | | |
| Address of school: | 19 Pembridge Villas London W11 3EP | | |
| E-mail address: | admin@wetherbyschoolprep.co.uk | | |
| Telephone number: | 0207 2430243 | | |
| Fax number: | 0207 3135244 | | |

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Headteacher: | Mr Robin Greenwood |
| Proprietor: | Alpha Plus Group Ltd |
| Chair of the governing body: | Mr Angus Fraser |
| Lead Inspector: | Mrs Jill Bainton |
| Dates of inspection: | 18 - 21 April 2005 |

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