

# Ravenstone House Pre-Preparatory School And Nursery

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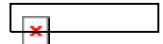
Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

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

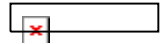
Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

## School details

### **Introduction and summary**

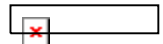


### **Purpose and scope of the inspection**



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**



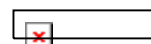
Ravenstone House Pre-Preparatory School and Nursery is part of the Ravenstone Group of Schools based in Milton Keynes. It occupies three sites in the Kensington and Westminster areas of central London. The Elvaston Place site takes children from three months to six years and currently there are 40 full-time and 34 part-time pupils on roll. The Hyde Park site takes children from two and a half months to five years and there are currently 60 full-time and 40 part-time pupils on roll.. The Queensberry Place site takes children from one year to three and a half years and there are currently 6 full-time and 34 part-time pupils on roll. Children may transfer to the Elvaston Place site should their parents choose after the age of three.

In total, the school has 106 full time and 108 part time pupils on roll. The Elvaston Place site is run by a headmaster, the Queensberry Place site by a matron and the Hyde Park site by a principal. General oversight of the work of the three sites is provided by a curriculum adviser and a nursery adviser both of whom are employed by the parent group. Transport between the three sites is facilitated by a school minibus which operates an efficient shuttle service.

The school caters mainly for families where both parents work in central London. The pupils come from a wide variety of nationalities with French being the largest group. A range of first languages and faiths is also represented and several children are in the early stages of learning English.

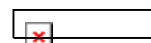
The school aims to offer 'a happy environment where excellence is the norm and where children develop to the full'. Admission is non-selective for pupils below the age of seven but it is intended to administer an entrance examination once pupils above that age are admitted. Some of the pupils go on to a variety of other schools at the ages of four or five.

### Summary of main findings



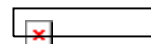
Although designated as one school, in practice the three sites operate as largely autonomous institutions. There is limited coherence between provision at each site, despite them working to a common set of policies and planning documents generated by the parent company. Individually they all provide very good care for the pupils and there are good links with their parents and carers. Overall, the children prosper and make progress but the effectiveness of the education provided for the older pupils is limited by the narrowness of the curriculum and of the teaching methods used.

### What the school does well



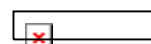
- its pastoral care for the pupils is very good;
- its provision for pupils personal development is good. They are taught to be polite, considerate of others and to cooperate at work and play;
- its relationships between adults and children are very good;
- its links with parents and carers are good; and
- it is well resourced with a good range of high quality books, toys and other stimulus material.

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



- take steps to improve the quality of teaching and assessment as detailed in section 1 of this report;
- fully comply with "Safeguarding Children in Education", DfES Circular 0027/2004;
- ensure that there is always a trained First Aider on each site; and
- carry out the improvements to the premises as outlined in section 5 of this report.

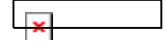
### What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002



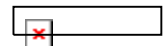
In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

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

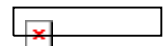
## Compliance with the regulations for registration



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



#### The quality of the curriculum



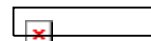
The school seeks to meet the developmental needs of the under-three year olds by following the principles of the national guidance 'Birth to Three Matters'. This is appropriate but as it has only recently been introduced, the staff are not yet fully aware of its implications and are still learning how to implement the document in full. Each developmental strand of 'Birth to Three Matters' is planned for and some good activities are provided. The provision for babies is very good. They are given many stimulating opportunities to explore the world around them through their senses. The colourful resources of different shapes, textures and materials together with the high quality relationships and the effective way staff talk to babies ensure they make good progress. The programme of learning for toddlers provides appropriate stimulation and experiences to enable them to make increasing sense of their widening world. However, there is limited understanding of how to help a child move from one stage of development to the next.

The school receives funding for some of its nursery age children and accordingly they are taught the national Foundation Stage curriculum. All six nationally agreed areas of learning are taught but the use of the outdoors and the physical development aspects of the curriculum are inadequate. Staff do not always exploit the learning potential of the activities they establish to the full. In particular, opportunities for developing the children's speaking and listening skills are frequently missed. This is more of an issue at the Hyde Park site than at the other two sites.

There are only three pupils aged six or rising six in the school. With the agreement of their parents, these pupils are taught the Foundation Stage curriculum. At present, there is no provision for pupils older than six. However, it is the intention that as the age range of the pupils expands, the full National Curriculum programmes of study will be taught. Some extra-curricular and enrichment activities are offered. These include horse riding, music and movement, ballet, story telling and frequent visits to nearby museums and other places of interest.

Despite the limitations noted above, most children prosper and make progress. The pupils in the Foundation Stage classes are clearly on their way to achieving the national early learning goals. They are generally well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, limitations to the assessment and record keeping systems mean that pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language do not always receive a curriculum fully matched to their learning needs.

#### The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Teachers have a good understanding of their role and provide work that challenges their pupils and enables them to learn. The nursery nurses and care staff have a more varied understanding of the learning needs of those in their care.

Lesson planning is of variable quality. At its best it enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills. Some of the Foundation Stage planning pays too little attention to the opportunities offered by the outdoors. It under-emphasises physical development and does not identify in sufficient detail the potential for oral development that the activities established could provide. This is partly the result of insufficient assessment of the children's attainment and achievement which means that staff have inadequate knowledge of the learning needs of their pupils. Assessment and recording procedures are not yet established for the under threes. Staff regularly observe what the children do but they do not record what they see. They are uncertain in identifying the key milestones in the children's development. In the Foundation Stage classes there is assessment in the areas of learning for personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. There is no assessment of their knowledge and understanding of the world and assessment in physical development only for the oldest pupils.

Reports to parents are issued on each pupil twice a year. They comment on the pupils' response to each subject taught and say a little about what has been learnt. They do not give targets for improvement.

The staff are very caring and have good relationships with those in their charge. They encourage them to behave sensibly and act responsibly. They provide them with stimulus and activities that are appropriate and have the potential for considerable learning. However, too often the activities for the older pupils are not supplemented by the kind of interaction with adults that would foster conceptual development and improve their linguistic competence. On occasion, adults do little more than watch children as they play.

Although parents are generally happy with the education that their children receive, several commented in the pre-inspection questionnaire that they were concerned with the high turn-over of staff which means that the children frequently have to get to know new adults. The evidence of the inspection is that the children are comfortable with the adults who look after them and that the adults, in turn, know the pupils well. However, because there is only limited assessment of the pupils' attainment, staff lack the diagnostic information that would enable their teaching to be more effective.

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

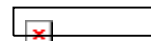
No.

***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:

- ensure that lessons are well planned, effective teaching methods and suitable activities are used and that time is managed wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c)); and
- ensure that there is a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and that information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

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



The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. All the sites are pleasant and welcoming and pupils enjoy coming to school and are happy. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive and the pupils respond by trying hard and behaving well. Pupils are encouraged to value each other's individuality.

Spiritual awareness is raised mainly through the sense of awe and wonder that the pupils experience from activities such as seeing how cornflour changes when water is added to it or by investigating the trails that snails leave. There is an emphasis on supporting charities and helping others. This encourages pupils to consider the circumstances of others less fortunate than themselves. All the major world faith festivals are celebrated throughout the year.

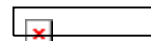
Assemblies are used mainly to foster moral development. Themes such as fairness and kindness are illustrated and discussed and the pupils respond well to the stories they are told and the ideas they are introduced to. Older pupils are given minor responsibilities around the school, such as being a register monitor. There is a strong emphasis on helping each other and there were many examples observed of pupils sharing toys and caring for each other.

Pupils are encouraged to appreciate cultural diversity and to respect the values and beliefs of others. At an appropriate level for the age of the pupils this is achieved through visits to museums and other places of interest and through events such as an international day when parents and others come into school to tell the children about the food, dress and customs of other countries.

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

Yes.

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



The school makes generally good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. A range of policies and procedures address all aspects of pupils' welfare. The staff are very caring, know the pupils well and provide them with an environment in which they feel safe and secure. Pupils are closely supervised at all times on the school premises. The school's admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with regulations.

Risk assessments are undertaken for all visits. Appropriate records of pupils with special medical conditions or need are kept and made known to relevant staff. Accidents are recorded, and there are members of staff qualified in First Aid on each site. At the Hyde Park site, however, there is only one such person which means that should she be absent or away from the site there is no appropriate cover. At Queensberry Place, there is only one member of staff with current First Aid training and she is the matron. She spends much of her time at the Elvaston Place site which means that there are occasions when there is no trained First Aider at Queensberry Place and this is against the regulations.

The school has made satisfactory provision for fire safety. There are regular fire drills, appliances are checked and fire risk assessments carried out. Potential safety hazards are reported conscientiously and action is taken to minimise these or carry out necessary repairs and maintenance as quickly as possible. On occasion, fire exits are blocked by parents leaving pushchairs or by the storage of equipment. Those in charge of the sites are aware of these instances and act to stop them.

The two matrons have designated responsibility for child protection. The school is aware of

appropriate guidelines and staff are alert to the need to protect pupils from abuse. However, the school's policy does not give advice to staff on what signs of possible abuse to look for. The designated persons for child protection have not yet undertaken training to a standard set by the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC). This is now required as a result of recently introduced legislation.

The school is committed to reviewing facilities should a disabled pupil be admitted.. The buildings at the Hyde Park site are physically accessible for those with mobility problems but at Elvaston Place and Queensberry Place access would be much more difficult and the large number of steep staircases makes movement around the building at Elvaston Place problematic for the younger children. The parent group of schools has not yet produced a three year plan to improve access as required by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002.

***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:

- fully comply with "Safeguarding Children in Education", DfES Circular 0027/2004, which states that staff should be given guidance on the signs of abuse to look for and that the designated person must undertake training to a standard set by the ACPC (paragraph 3(2)(c)); and
- ensure that there is always a trained First Aider on each site (paragraph 3(6)).

***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 teaching staff are appropriately qualified and many of the support staff are also adequately qualified for their roles and the ages of pupils with whom they work. All staff in contact with pupils have been subject to satisfactory clearance by the Criminal Records Bureau and to checks against List 99. Because of quite a high turnover of staff, the school uses agency staff to fill vacancies on a short-term basis. The school has satisfactory procedures for recruiting new staff and carries out all the necessary pre-employment checks.

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

Yes.

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

The school is housed in three sites of very different characteristics. Elvaston Place is a substantial, five-storey building which was converted for use as a pre-preparatory school in 2003. The large number of staircases makes movement around the building difficult for small children but they act sensibly and follow rules about holding on to banisters. Not all the building is used at present but it is intended that this site will grow in both numbers and age range to cater for pupils up to the age of 11. The Queensberry Place site is located in two rooms rented from the Biology Institute; there is limited office, bathroom and toilet space there. The Hyde Park site consists of a series of wooden and brick buildings in a pleasant garden which was once a churchyard. All three sites are substantial and in a good state of repair.

The three premises are generally well maintained, clean and welcoming. Classrooms and shared areas are tidy, well-organised and enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. These rooms are mostly adequate in size for the number of pupils and have suitable furniture and fittings. They are equipped with a good range of resources for teaching and learning.

The facilities for the preparation, serving and consumption of food are good at the Hyde Park Site. Food for the pupils at the Elvaston Place and Queensberry Place sites is prepared at Elvaston Place. The kitchen area there is unhygienic; the arrangements for washing dishes and utensils are unsatisfactory and there is a general lack of cleanliness. The school reports that no environmental health check has been carried out on the Elvaston Place site. Arrangements for serving food at the two sites are adequate.

There are inappropriate facilities for children who are taken ill. At Hyde Park, they are put into a small office next to the babies' room and at Elvaston Place they are laid on a wooden bench in the entrance hall. Neither of these arrangements meets the requirements.

There is sufficient outdoor space for pupils to play safely at Hyde Park. However, there are no such facilities at Queensberry Place and at Elvaston Place there is only a small decked area in the well of the building. The school does its best to compensate for these deficiencies by taking the older children to Hyde Park for games twice a week and by using the decked area to the full.

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

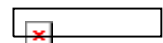
No.

***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:

- ensure that there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)); and
- ensure that there are adequate facilities for the hygienic preparation of food (paragraph 5(m)).

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



Prospective parents are given a useful folder giving information about the school and its proprietor, and about the curriculum. Other information is available to parents on request. There is regular and frequent contact between parents and carers, and the staff at the beginning and end of the school day. A very large majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire reported that they were happy with the information they receive from the school and feel welcome there.

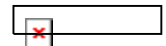


children do and the progress they are making.

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

Yes.

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

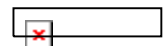


The school has a clear and detailed policy for handling complaints that fully meets the requirements. It allows for a complaint to be considered on an informal basis initially, followed by appropriate formal procedures should they be necessary. It is the stated intention that valid complaints should be considered fairly and objectively. The policy is made available to parents on request.

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

Yes.

**School details**



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Name of school:	Ravenstone House Pre-Preparatory School And Nursery		
DfES ref number:	207/6404		
Type of school:	Pre-preparatory		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	2½ months - 6 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 54,	Girls 52,	Total 106
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 57,	Girls 51,	Total 108
Annual fees (day pupils):	£3,120 to £13,080		
Address of school:	24, Elvaston Place South Kensington London SW7 5NL Long Garden Albion Street London W2 2AX 22 Queensberry Place South Kensington London SW7 2DZ		
E-mail address:	elvastonplace@ravenstonehouse.co.uk		
Telephone number:	0207 2253131		
Fax number:	0207 2253434		
Headteacher:	Mr D Bryanton/Mrs A Saunders/Mrs B Nugent		
Proprietor:	Mrs H Pauley		
Lead Inspector:	Mr I A Rodger		
Dates of inspection:	9 - 12 May 2005		

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