



Hall School Wimbledon

Independent School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

DfES Registration Number 212/6390
Unique Reference Number 101086
Inspection number 296819
Inspection dates 7-8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Mr Stephen Walker AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 4-16	Published 5 April 2007	Reference no. 296819
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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

Hall School Wimbledon, founded in 1990, is a co-educational, independent day school for pupils aged 4 to 16 years. The school takes pupils with a range of abilities from Merton and the neighbouring boroughs. There are 339 boys and 195 girls on roll. The school population consists of a rich mixture of cultures with over 24% of the pupils speaking English as their second language. There is a small unit for pupils on the autistic spectrum at Ann Margaret House and the school also takes a small number of pupils with physical impairments. The school is housed on two sites. The junior school (Reception to Year 6) is accommodated in Beavers Holt in Putney Vale and the senior school (Years 7 to 11) occupies The Downs in Wimbledon village.

The school provides the Common Entrance syllabus, preparing pupils for examinations to secondary independent schools. It also prepares pupils for entrance at age 7, 8 and 11 to junior independent schools. Most students remain at the school to take GCSE examinations. The mission statement, the '*Spirit of the School*', contains a commitment '*to produce the very highest standard of education*' and '*to ensure that our children are happy, secure and fulfilled*'. The school was last inspected in 2001.

Evaluation of the school

Hall School Wimbledon is a good school with some outstanding features. It is successful in its aim of providing a good all-round education for pupils of a wide range of attainment. The headmaster has a clear vision for the school and ensures that the '*Spirit of the School*' is translated into practice. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they are well mannered. They flourish in the secure and supportive environment of the school. The school's curriculum is good with outstanding opportunities for enrichment activities. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and there is an atmosphere of effective learning in the school. Pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The school has made good progress on the issues identified in the previous report. There are a number of issues that the school must address in order to comply with the regulations.

Quality of education

The school provides a good quality curriculum with an outstanding range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. There are regular educational visits in all years that support pupils in their learning and personal development. The curriculum is broad and balanced with a real emphasis on the development of the whole child. All core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum are taught. The school does not have a written curriculum policy although there are schemes of work for each subject and year group. Pupils are prepared well for the Common Entrance and GCSE examinations, results of which are well above local and national averages. There is good provision for personal social and health education, although the school has not developed a systematic audit of this provision across the school.

Music is an important part of the school and there are good opportunities for pupils to be members of the school choirs and to learn to play musical instruments. There is regular provision of physical education and pupils are encouraged to take part in the additional sporting activities. The outside environment in the junior school is used effectively to support the curriculum. The school places a strong emphasis on the importance of reading and recently arranged a Book Week. The school uses opportunities to develop the understanding of the many different cultures present at the school through themed activities and special lunches. The Reception class dressed up in traditional Chinese clothing to celebrate the start of the Year of the Golden Pig. Pupils start to learn French in the Reception class. Resources to support the curriculum are good and impact well on pupils' learning. However, information communication technology is not fully used as a tool for teaching and learning. The school does not provide a formal careers guidance programme and some pupils in Years 10 and 11 feel that they would benefit from more advice.

Teaching is good with some examples of outstanding practice. Teachers have excellent relationships with the pupils who respond well to their tasks and activities. The small classes allow the teachers to provide good support for individuals and permit pupils to work at their own pace. Pupils make good progress and consistently achieve high standards. Pupils' high standards of behaviour and attention support their progress. In the majority of lessons there is a calm, purposeful and positive atmosphere. In a number of lessons, teachers shared the lesson objectives so that the pupils were clear about the intended learning. Some teachers are particularly skilled at questioning so that all the pupils are challenged and fully engaged in the work. Support for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, or who use English as an additional language, is good and as a result they make good progress. Assessment is good as the school has developed a weekly homework and testing system in all subjects so that it is easy to track the progress of individual pupils. These

assessments inform lesson planning and enable teachers to identify the extra support required by the pupils. There is no consistent system across the school of marking pupils' work.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The core of 'The Spirit of the School', published in the prospectus, centres on respect for all and caring for all. This is shown in the way staff go about their work and is reflected in pupils' very positive attitudes to school life. Pupils enjoy school and say that they are treated kindly and with respect. The school has very high expectations of pupils' conduct and as a result pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding.

The development of the schools grounds has been carefully thought out so that pupils are able to value the environment. There is an emphasis on the development of pupils' senses of self-worth and self-confidence. Pupils are encouraged to succeed and acknowledge the success of other pupils. The school places a high emphasis on valuing the individual and on ensuring the full inclusion of all pupils, whatever their background or learning needs. Pupils from many nationalities work well together and pupils value the cultural diversity within the school. They make presentations to their peers about their own backgrounds, helping others to appreciate and value other cultures.

Pupils develop a strong social awareness as members of the school community. The headmaster conveys a strong sense of equality and the importance of showing respect for all, which is evident in school life. Pupils contribute significantly to school activities, such as the domestic arrangements on residential trips. However, a significant number of pupils' questionnaires indicate that they feel they are not involved enough in discussion regarding developments in the school. Inspectors agree with this view.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is satisfactory. The school maintains a high level of care for pupils who feel free to discuss issues of concern openly and without anxiety. Staff do not tolerate bullying of any kind and pupils feel very secure in the school. Rare incidents of misbehavior and subsequent sanctions are recorded. There is no written policy on child protection responsibilities and procedures within the school. Fire safety precautions are carried out regularly and systematically recorded. The school has clear first aid procedures and a designated qualified first aider. Accessibility of the school premises for disabled pupils has been improved on both sites. The

school does not formally undertake risk assessments particularly for practical lessons and out of school activities. The pathways to the huts and the uneven paving stones on the pathways in the junior school provide a potential health and safety risk for pupils.

Pupils are knowledgeable about the value of healthy eating and taking exercise. The school is proud of the fresh and wholesome food that is provided by the kitchens. There is a range of sports available to both the girls and boys. The arrangements for the registration of admissions and attendance meet the requirements fully. There is good supervision at all times in the buildings, outside in the grounds and on school trips.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff are subject to appropriate checks on their suitability to work with children. Enhanced checks are made with the Criminal Records Bureau. The school has satisfactory procedures for recruitment but these do not always include a sufficiently detailed medical fitness check, or written references from at least two referees.

School's premises and accommodation

The suitability of the accommodation is good, and generally meets the educational purposes of the school. The senior school at The Downs occupies a refurbished Victorian residential building, which includes a hall and classrooms including a computer room, science laboratory, art room, technology room and gym. The junior school is housed at Beavers Holt in a former primary school building with additional, well designed, timber-framed classrooms. The external areas are well landscaped with attractive gardens and functional play areas on both sites. The slides in the adventure playground on the junior site do not have soft landing areas. The school makes good use of the facilities of local sports clubs and playing fields adjacent to the schools. However, the medical rooms on both sites do not fully meet the requirements and there are insufficient toilets for boys in the senior school. There is a regular programme for maintenance and decoration of both buildings. The classrooms are generally of an appropriate size, while corridors and most classroom walls are made attractive by well presented displays of pupils' work. There is no graffiti and no litter in the school.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

A school prospectus provides details of the expectations and routines of the school as well as the necessary contact phone numbers. There is also a very

comprehensive and informative web site for the school. The headmaster writes regular information letters to parents ensuring that they are kept up to date about the school and its activities. Detailed reports on pupils' progress are provided once a year. There are formal parents' evenings once a year when the progress of pupils can be discussed with subject teachers. Parents are highly complimentary of the school and clearly appreciate the support for their children. The school does not provide an account of income and expenditure for pupils who are funded by the local authority.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has an appropriate complaints policy which is available on request to parents. The school plans to include this in the proposed parental contract. There have been very few complaints by parents and the headmaster and team leaders are usually able to resolve any concerns in an informal manner.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005 with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- provide a curriculum policy set out in writing and supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work (paragraph 1(2))
- provide appropriate careers guidance for secondary age pupils (paragraph 1(2)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with DfES guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- have regard to the DfES guidance: 'Health and Safety: Responsibilities and powers' and ensure that there are no health and safety risks for the pupils (paragraph 3(4)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, carry out appropriate checks to confirm their identity, medical fitness, character references and, where appropriate, professional references (paragraph 4 (c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that when a pupil who is registered at the school is funded by the local authority, that an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is submitted to the local authority (paragraph 6 (7)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Develop a systematic audit of the personal, social and health education provision in the school
- Provide opportunities for the students to participate more in discussions regarding developments in the school

School details

Name of school	Hall School Wimbledon		
DfES number	212/6390		
Unique reference number	101086		
Type of school	All age		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	April 1990		
Age range of pupils	4-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 339	Girls: 195	Total: 534
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 4	Girls: 2	Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,683-£9,780		
Address of school	Hall School Wimbledon Stroud Crescent Putney Vale London SW15 3EQ		
Telephone number	0208 788 2370		
Fax number	0208 788 2121		
Email address	principal@hsw.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Timothy Hobbs		
Proprietor	Mr Timothy Hobbs		
Reporting inspector	Mr Stephen Walker AI		
Dates of inspection	7-8 March 2007		