



# The Hall School

Independent School

Inspection report

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DfES Registration Number 312/6054  
Unique Reference Number 102455  
Inspection number 301549  
Inspection dates 7-8 February 2007  
Reporting inspector Mr George Derby 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).

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Age group  
2-7

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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

The Hall School is an independent pre-preparatory school for boys and girls aged from two to seven. Pupils are mainly from a range of minority ethnic groups, although a few are of White British origin. The school opened in 1958 and, over the past few years, it has grown so that its roll is now 45 pupils. It is situated in a quiet residential area in Northwood, in the London borough of Hillingdon. The building the school occupies, The Grange, is a Grade 1 and 2 listed building. It is rented from a company which also uses it in the evenings and at weekends for community meetings and for functions, such as weddings.

The school *'strives to create a nurturing, challenging, secure and happy environment in which pupils are able to explore ideas, develop independence of thought and enhance self-esteem'*.

This is the school's first published report.

## Evaluation of the school

The Hall School is a good school which fulfils its mission statement well. The headteacher has provided an exciting and well-developed curriculum in a nurturing environment, where pupils work productively, behave well and are happy. Their enjoyment, which is evident in everything they do, is at the heart of the school's ethos. Teaching is good and as a result pupils make good progress and achieve well, both in their personal development and academically. The standard of care is satisfactory. They are prepared effectively for their next school. Nearly all regulations are met.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It is sensitive to pupils' ages, needs, interests and ethnic backgrounds and meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties well. It gives high priority to supporting pupils' personal development as well as their academic progress, and, as a result, produces well-rounded children. The opportunities provided result in great enjoyment of lessons by pupils, especially in practical subjects where teachers bring learning alive. It also means that pupils get a good breadth and depth of knowledge. The headteacher's vision

and determination to provide such a broad curriculum, with many aspects taught by specialist staff, has clearly been successful.

The curriculum is well planned and a good personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship programme is provided for all pupils. The basic curriculum for pupils aged from two to five years is supplemented with a rich range of opportunities from subjects which are taught by specialists. These include information and communication technology (ICT), French, music and movement, ballet, gymnastics, games, swimming and music. These activities also continue in Key Stage 1 and the teaching in these areas makes a significant impact on pupils' progress. Enterprise projects prepare pupils exceptionally well for later life. There is a good range of instrumental tuition.

Links between subjects are satisfactory and are best in the Foundation Stage. While planning for teaching ICT as a subject is strong, teachers do not always show how ICT is to be used in other subjects. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors. Good use is made of local facilities and the environment, especially when studying faiths and religions. The school uses parents' expertise well.

Teaching is good and this results in good progress in pupils' learning. The teaching seen in art and physical education was outstanding. What pupils are to learn in lessons is usually stated at the beginning of each lesson. They also know what they need to do to improve through the targets they have agreed with their teachers, the feedback in lessons and the helpful comments in their books. Pupils usually concentrate well, although not all teachers are vigilant enough to notice the few pupils who stop paying attention. There are high expectations of pupils. Questioning is probing, challenges pupils' thinking and problem solving skills effectively, and is well matched to their capabilities. However, planning and activities in lessons do not always take full account of their varying abilities.

Teachers provide a good variety of ways of helping pupils learn and resources are generally good. Despite some limitations with the densely carpeted areas and the absence of a dedicated outdoor area, pupils aged two to five have plenty of opportunities for 'messy' play. They have a satisfactory range of equipment for physical activity. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils at these ages.

Teachers assess pupils' learning adequately during lessons. Occasionally, lesson conclusions are too brief. Teachers know the pupils well and have clear records of their attainment and progress. However, some recording is not refined enough, and the criteria for assessment do not always fully reflect the latest curriculum guidance. Assessment of what pupils have learned in a topic is carried out regularly. In the Nursery, pupils' skills are assessed well. The school

takes part in annual national assessments at the end of Year 2 and pupils' attainments are generally above the national age-related expectation.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Staff generally establish clear routines and firm boundaries and this is reflected in pupils' good attendance, behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. They love their school and enjoy their education.

Pupils are helped to gain an insight into themselves through the curriculum and assemblies. Pupils regularly think of others less fortunate than themselves: they help raise funds for various national charities and local organisations. They have taken part in a fundraising concert for a local hospice, provided entertainment for local elderly people and have visited and performed in a children's home for blind and severely disabled children. Pupils regularly raise funds for the National Children's Homes, Royal National Institute for the Blind, Red Nose Day and Jeans for Genes.

They learn to become responsible citizens through the PSHE and citizenship programme that is linked to religious education. Participating in such initiatives as the 'Chatterbox Challenge' enables them to extend their interpersonal and communication skills well. Such activities as the Year 2 Enterprise projects give them a good base for achieving future general economic well-being. Older pupils are very good role models for younger pupils and have an extensive range of responsibilities and leadership roles which they take seriously. The school listens to its pupils well. Pupils all try eagerly to gain house points, golden stars and work hard toward getting an award cup or merit certificate.

In this multicultural school, all pupils show great respect for each other and relationships are excellent. They benefit greatly from learning about religions other than their own and are well prepared for living in a multicultural society. Good resources and specialist teaching in music and art enhance pupils' cultural development well.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The overall standard of care is satisfactory. Pupils' personal welfare is of high priority and they are well supervised at all times. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe. Risk assessments are satisfactory and a range of policies for anti-bullying, health and safety and behaviour are implemented satisfactorily. However, there are one or two areas in which the school's provision does not meet requirements. Not all aspects of current guidance on safeguarding pupils are reflected in the school's policy. Fire safety

requirements are not fully met as fire extinguishers do not have up-to-date checks. These are arranged by the company which leases the building. First Aid and procedures for recording accidents are appropriate. The school encourages the pupils to take regular exercise and to eat healthily with fruit and vegetables at breaktime.

The school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 as far as it can, although aspects of this lie with the company which leases the building.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school makes all the necessary checks with the Criminal Records Bureau before staff are appointed, although occasionally unchecked staff working for the company leasing the building appear on the school site. Recruitment has not included identity or medical checks up to now, but a new system is being introduced to ensure that the school does so in the future.

### School's premises and accommodation

The building provides a suitable learning environment. It is clean, tidy and well decorated; however, a few first floor rooms have ill-fitting windows and are draughty. Most classrooms are bright. There is an ICT suite with a small number of networked computers, although the tables are too high for the pupils. The art room, with its stunning array of high quality work, is an excellent resource. The music room is adequate for instrumental tuition.

The spaces on the ground floor are used well. These are the company's function rooms and are not ideal as classrooms; equipment and displays of pupils' work cannot be set up permanently, they have to be stored away at night and put out in the morning. Pupils' work is not allowed to be displayed in the entrance to the school. The bar area, used for assembly, is dimly lit. The outdoor area consists of a formal garden, used when the ground is dry, and a tarmac area which is a car park outside school hours. Recreation areas are adequate. There is an unfenced drop to the rear of the building, which has been assessed for risk and is well supervised. The headteacher's request for this to be fenced, has, as yet, not met with a successful response from the company leasing the building.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information for parents and prospective parents which meets requirements fully. There are good systems for keeping parents informed from day to day. The vast majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very supportive of the school and raised very few disagreements.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has clear procedures for handling complaints which meet the regulations.

## 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 provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that all aspects of the Department for Education and Skills guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) are reflected in its policy and procedures (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- ensure that fire extinguishers are checked in line with requirements to ensure a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by a risk assessment under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, and by any report from the Fire Authority (paragraph 3(5)).

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, ensure that all necessary identity and medical checks are made (paragraph 4(c)).

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

- continue to liaise with the company leasing the building to ensure that its use for other purposes is organised in such a way that the health, safety and welfare of pupils is safeguarded and their education is not interrupted by other users (paragraph 5(e)).

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- ensure that work in lessons is planned to meet the different needs of pupils
- assess pupils' capabilities and progress using finely-graded criteria which relate to the curriculum
- improve the use of ICT in all subjects to support teaching and learning.



## School details

Name of school	The Hall School		
DfES number	312/6054		
Unique reference number	102455		
Type of school	Pre-preparatory school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1958		
Age range of pupils	2-7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 20	Girls: 8	Total: 28
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 11	Total: 17
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,550 - £6,300		
Address of school	The Grange Rickmansworth Road Northwood Middlesex HA6 2RB		
Telephone number	01923 822807		
Fax number	01923 822309		
Email address	thehall@dnwesson.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Wesson		
Proprietor	Mrs Diane Wesson		
Reporting inspector	Mr George Derby AI		
Dates of inspection	7-8 February 2007		