

Chiswick and Bedford Park Preparatory School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	313/6051
Unique Reference Number	102547
Inspection number	316924
Inspection dates	1-2 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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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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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Chiswick and Bedford Park is a co-educational preparatory school in Bedford Park, Hounslow for pupils aged four to eleven. It accepts boys aged four to eight, and girls from four to 11 years. Founded in 1915 it has the aim of providing a happy, nurturing atmosphere and securing high academic standards. The school is over-subscribed and there are currently 180 pupils on roll: 130 girls and 50 boys. The school is non-selective and a small proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. There are a number of pupils from minority ethnic families. This is the first published inspection report for the school.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education and it has outstanding features. It meets its aim of providing a strong nurturing atmosphere in which pupils thrive in both their personal and academic development. The quality of teaching is good. This enables pupils to make good progress as they move through the school and high standards are achieved. Pupils love school and the aimed for 'happy family atmosphere' is achieved in full. Pupils become mature, sensitive and responsible young people. Their behaviour is outstanding and they value each other and their teachers. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The school meets almost all of the regulations for the registration of independent schools.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school offers a broad range of subjects and places a good emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Their days in school are full and well organised. Overall, pupils learn well and make good progress. However, the curriculum is not always systematically planned to help pupils learn as much as they could. At times, insufficient regard is taken of the nationally recommended Foundation Stage Early Years curriculum for the Reception-aged children. The curriculum policy is not fully supported by comprehensive plans and schemes of work in all subjects. Where teachers use schemes of work as the basis of their lessons, as in English, mathematics and French, pupils build up their skills, knowledge and understanding effectively year on year.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and in some lessons it is outstanding. Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond well by working hard and behaving outstandingly well. There is a purposeful, friendly working atmosphere in classrooms. As a result, pupils make good progress as they move through the school and excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Staff training has recently focused on the development of pupils' learning. This is paying dividends. Staff ensure that pupils' preferred learning styles are met and they provide good opportunities for pupils to talk about their work. In addition, lesson objectives are shared with pupils and their independence in learning is developed well by staff who check objectives at the end of lessons to ensure targets are met.

Teachers are enthusiastic, well informed and committed. Relationships are good. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that the work set matches the learning needs of all groups of pupils. However, this is not always the case and, on occasion, some pupils, particularly those that find learning hard or particularly easy, do not progress as quickly as they could. Teachers set a good pace to lessons, explain well and invariably listen carefully to what the pupils have to say. This contributes well to lesson assessments as good questioning skills help staff to elicit what has been learned. Homework is set and marked effectively and this helps to consolidate learning and has a positive impact on progress. The support staff make a strong contribution to pupils' progress by prompting and supporting pupils in lessons and also in withdrawal groups.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. The school helps pupils to develop into mature young people able to think for themselves. Pupils have plenty to say, with much that is worth listening to. Their behaviour is outstanding. The teachers are very successful in fostering pupils' enjoyment of school and their positive attitudes towards learning, particularly in regard to an appreciation of poetry. In discussion with the girls, they said, 'The best thing about this school is the way the teachers have time to listen'.

School assemblies make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development by allowing pupils the opportunity for reflection and 'to have their own space'. The school places a strong emphasis on celebrating pupils' efforts through attractive displays of their work. The school's star awards celebrate their achievements and provide excellent inclusion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Pupils form a cohesive family group and the older pupils act as very good role models for the younger ones. Attendance is very good.

Discussion times and well chosen stories help pupils to understand their responsibilities to others and to the broader community. Pupils help both old and young by supporting the elderly and also by acting as monitors and prefects. Each

pupil can play a major role in the life of the school, for example by helping to organise fundraising events for those in need, or by participating in the drama shows.

Cultural development is good. Pupils learn French and Spanish. There are opportunities to learn about other cultures through work in art, history, geography and in other ways, for example, looking at stories from the African continent. Pupils work closely with the local community, such as the police and fire services and learn about public institutions.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school places a high priority on the welfare, health and safety of the pupils and its provision is good. The school is a safe and secure place in which to work and learn. In consequence, pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe. For example, children in the Reception classes comply well with the staff's expectations when moving around the classroom. Throughout the school, pupils adopt safe practices when moving around the building and are also sensitive to others when at play during break and lunchtimes. There is a full range of carefully considered policies that are implemented effectively. These include anti-bullying, promotion of good behaviour, first aid and policies for health and safety both in school and when making visits. Risk assessments for these activities are well-founded and carefully compiled. All child protection and pupil safeguarding regulations are met in full. The school keeps admission and attendance registers in accordance with regulations.

As a result of the effective provision, pupils develop a good appreciation of healthy lifestyles. They have a good understanding, for example, of the importance of taking regular exercise and healthy eating. The school does not yet fulfil its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act (2002) because it has not developed a three year plan to improve access to the building.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff have been subject to satisfactory clearance with the Criminal Records Bureau. In addition, for new staff, the school carries out appropriate checks on identity, qualifications and previous employment history. However, the requirement to confirm staff's medical fitness to teach prior to the confirmation of their appointment is not met.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises consist of a large Victorian house in the Bedford Park district of Hounslow. Accommodation is very compact both in terms of classroom size and outdoor play space. The school makes excellent use of its buildings and it is very well maintained and decorated. It provides a colourful and attractive learning environment which is considerably enhanced by stimulating displays of pupils' work. The space for outdoor learning for the Reception classes is very limited and lack of direct access to the outdoors limits opportunities for staff to plan activities that meet the national guidelines. The school uses the nearby church hall on a daily basis for drama, music, physical education and assemblies. This is an excellent resource. In addition, the local park and all-weather astro-turf courts are used for games and sports activities. The school does not meet requirements for the provision of toilet facilities because there are too few toilets for the number of pupils on roll. In addition, the school recognises that there are not appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information for parents and prospective parents. There is an attractive prospectus that is complemented by a number of inserts which, taken together, provide useful information and a good flavour of life at the school. Parents receive regular newsletters keeping them up to date with school life. In addition, comprehensive and helpful reports are prepared for parents which outline their children's successes. These are provided twice each year. The large majority of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and they expressed a high degree of satisfaction overall. A few parents commented that they would like to be more involved in their children's learning. Whilst the school values the contribution that parents make, particularly in supporting the pupils' homework by checking their children's homework diary, these parents' wishes would be difficult to meet because space restrictions make the presence of additional adults unviable on a regular basis.

Procedures for handling complaints

The procedures comply fully with the regulations and specify clear time scales for the informal and formal stages of any complaint.

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 suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, seek evidence of medical fitness to teach (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

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

- provide sufficient toilet facilities to meet regulations (paragraph 5(k))
- provide appropriate facilities for the care of sick or injured pupils (paragraph 5(l)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002) the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

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:

- complete the task of preparing schemes of work for subjects taught ensuring that lesson plans provide a range of activities to meet the learning needs of all groups of pupils
- amend curricular planning and organisation for the Reception classes to enable them to meet national guidelines.

School details

Name of school	Chiswick and Bedford Park Preparatory School		
DCSF number	3136051		
Unique reference number	102547		
Type of school	Preparatory school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1915		
Age range of pupils	4-11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll	Boys: 50	Girls: 130	Total: 180
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,280		
Address of school	Priory House Priory Avenue Bedford Park London W4 1TX		
Telephone number	0208 994 1804		
Fax number	0208 995 3603		
Email address	cbpschool@hotmail.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Sunderland		
Proprietor	Mr and Mrs M Morrow		
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler		
Dates of inspection	1-2 November 2007		