

Hurlingham School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	212/6147
Unique Reference Number	101067
Inspection number	316937
Inspection dates	31 October-1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI

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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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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

Hurlingham School is an independent, non-selective co-educational preparatory school providing for up to 320 children aged 4-11 years. The current number on roll is 304. The school is situated in Putney, within the London Borough of Wandsworth in south-west London. It opened in 1947, moved to its current location in 2004 and was registered in 2005.

The school aims to '*... nurture self-confidence, self-discipline, self-motivation, self-esteem and above all a thirst and enjoyment for learning...(and to) continue to foster an intimate and welcoming environment centred on family values, with a strong focus on good manners and respect for one another.*'

This is the school's first Ofsted inspection although there was an inspection of the Early Years provision in the summer of 2007. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Hurlingham School provides its pupils with good education and outstanding care. It meets all the required regulations. The good curriculum provides a wide, balanced and relevant variety of activities. Teaching is good and assessment procedures are satisfactory. As a result most pupils make good progress. The school has a very good reputation and parents are highly positive about it. The new headteacher and leadership team have identified the school's many strengths effectively and are well placed to continue the improvements to ensure an even better quality of provision.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. It has breadth and balance with creativity and enrichment in its heart. A broad range of subjects are offered and there is a good provision for basic skills. These include literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) which help prepare pupils for their future lives. There is an effective policy which links well to the other areas of learning and subjects. The school offers the pupils a wide range of rich and varied activities. Pupils are able to enjoy specialist subjects which include French, music, art, physical education (PE), ballet and Latin. The successful personal, social and health education

(PSHE) programme is effectively delivered throughout the school. Additional extra-curricular activities are well attended and these include karate, chess and art.

To support various areas of the curriculum, the school organises well-planned visits to galleries and residential trips to farms and educational centres. Effective PE provision supports pupils in thinking about health and fitness, using the well-resourced and carefully timetabled main hall.

Teaching is good overall, ranging from outstanding to satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers structure and support the learning activities effectively. As a result, clear planning and targets support pupils' further improvement and they make good progress. Teachers employ effective strategies to manage pupils' behaviour by focusing on challenging activities. Teachers have good questioning skills. These encourage pupils to think and engage them in interesting discussions and develop their research skills, for example in mathematics, history and PSHE. Lessons are stimulating and enthusiastic. In a ballet lesson observed, the teacher helped pupils imagine how to be a mermaid or a flower bud with great creativity. Good and even exceptional achievement is evident from the high quality art and sport displays around the school. However, the planning of some lessons does not match sufficiently closely the different learning needs of pupils. This is especially for the more able, who often work on the same level as the other pupils. They receive more challenging work after completing the same work. Some teachers' lesson plans only describe the activity that pupils are going to do. They are not sufficiently clear about what pupils with different abilities will have learnt by the end of the lesson.

Assessment is satisfactory overall. There is some useful information about pupils based on national tests. Overall, pupils make good progress throughout their time at the school. However, the informal, day-to-day information about how groups and individual pupils are progressing is applied inconsistently across the school. There are some good examples of individual, group and class assessment, but these systems are not sufficiently embedded to provide a secure overview of how year groups and classes perform over the year. The school has already identified the monitoring of pupils' progress as a priority and is well placed to improve this further. Assessment is a priority in the clear and well-structured development plan.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good, with some outstanding features. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are keen to take part in all their learning and are enthusiastic about the school and what it can offer them. Their participation rate in extra-curricular activities is high. Pupils' attendance is good. In addition the school is taking appropriately rigorous steps to reduce the proportion of pupils who are absent due to being on holiday during term time. Pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being. They acquire good skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT and there are many good opportunities to learn to work in teams. For example, the recently introduced house system encourages pupils to work

together effectively and develop their social responsibility by working with different age groups. They develop a growing awareness of public institutions and services.

Pupils make positive contributions to the community exceptionally well. They choose the charities to which they wish to contribute and are able to raise funds for a variety of groups. For example, pupils have been raising money to support a community school in Zambia. Pupils help around the school and some have taken on the responsibilities of form monitors in all classes. There are sound plans for introducing a school council in the near future.

The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. There is no bullying and no suggestion of negative attitudes towards any groups or individuals. Pupils are polite and are able to understand right from wrong. There is an extensive range of cultural events and planned activities across the curriculum. For example, pupils have produced African art and have taken part in an African evening. Some year groups went to see a visiting French market to practise their language skills. The curriculum plans support the effective development of pupils' tolerance and understanding of different cultures effectively through studies of India, Mexico, St Lucia and Kenya.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The development of pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Child protection procedures are very robust. The school keeps immaculate records and risk assessments. Every precaution is taken to ensure pupils' health and safety both in the building and on schools trips. A good example of this is the way staff are issued with rucksacks containing mobile phone and first aid equipment. The records of pupils' medical intolerances and allergies are maintained diligently. This information is accessible to appropriate staff. The school fulfils its responsibilities with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Pupils feel very safe in school. They can talk to teachers if they have any problems. The bullying records are empty because any initial problem is tackled immediately and effectively by staff. Some pupils told inspectors that they are happy and feel safe to talk to staff about their worries. A Year 6 pupil said *'I felt warmth in the school as soon as I stepped in.'*

There is excellent provision to encourage pupils to be healthy. As a result, school meals are cooked on the premises and are locally sourced. The curriculum is carefully devised to support pupils' understanding of how to live healthily, and includes timetabled visits to the local park for sport and PE. The school takes part in the local authority's 'Walking to school' project and the fund-raising 'Walk for Zambia' used pedometers to encourage pupils to measure their distance.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has robust systems in place to ensure that all staff are suitably appointed. There are meticulous and rigorous record keeping systems in place, which include

the maintenance of a single central register of checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation enable pupils to feel and be safe and to progress with their learning. The site is a recently purpose-built modern school building. It has well-resourced classrooms and specialist areas. There is a very well equipped medical room with its own toilet facilities. The entrance area is welcoming and allows a supervised but free-flow of visitors and parents throughout the day.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information to parents, parents of prospective pupils, and to others on request. There is a well-written prospectus with all relevant information. This is strongly supported by the school's informative website. Suitable written reports to parents are provided. These are being developed further as part of the school's priority for improving the recording and reporting of pupils' progress.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clear, written and fair complaints procedure. Feedback from most parents indicates that they are aware of the procedures.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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:

- develop a more consistent and cohesive approach to assessing and supporting the progress of all pupils
- raise the quality of all teaching to that of the best in the school in order to challenge all pupils, especially the more able.

School details

Name of school	Hurlingham School
DCSF number	212/6147
Unique reference number	101067
Type of school	Preparatory school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1947
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 124 Girls: 180 Total: 304
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,390-£9,990
Address of school	122 Putney Bridge Road Putney London SW15 2NQ
Telephone number	0208 874 7186
Fax number	0208 875 0372
Email address	head@hurlinghamschool.co.uk
Headteacher	Mrs Valerie Willmott
Proprietor	Mrs Fiona Goulden
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI
Dates of inspection	31 October-1 November 2007