

# North London Rudolf Steiner School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	309/6067
Unique Reference Number	102169
Inspection number	317889
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton

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

The North London Rudolf Steiner School is an independent co-educational school, which opened in 1985. There are currently 42 children aged three and a half to six years who attend both full and part time. The school is held in part of Campsbourne Baptist Church in Hornsey, North London. In line with normal Steiner practice there is no headteacher, and the College of Teachers is responsible for the educational provision. The administrator is in charge of day-to-day running of the school. There are 24 children currently in receipt of government funding and the school has not yet been inspected by Ofsted Children's Services (formerly Early Years). There is also a playgroup known as the Rosehip Playgroup held on the same premises which is associated with the school and registered with Ofsted Children's Services.

The school's curriculum and teaching are inspired by the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner as expressed through the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. The school aims to,

*'Receive the children with reverence, educate them with love, and relinquish them with freedom.'*

The school was last inspected in 2004.

## Evaluation of the school

The North London Rudolf Steiner School provides a satisfactory quality of education and care. Children are nurtured and guided through the Steiner method of learning, which enables them to make satisfactory progress. They acquire new knowledge and become self-confident, independent learners. Provision for the children's welfare, health and safety is good. Parents are supportive and involved in the life of the school, commenting, for example, that it 'provides a secure environment on both an emotional and physical level' and that 'this type of education for the early years is invaluable'.

### Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is a combination of the Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood curriculum and the national Foundation Stage curriculum. Together, these provide a structured programme of activities that is generally matched to the

children's age and stage of development. The curriculum follows a rhythm of seasonal themes; the current focus is 'apple time' and 'harvest'. The children are currently busy pressing apples to make juice, preparing apple crumble, making vegetable soup and baking bread. The routines and rhythms of each day follow a regular pattern; these are 'ring time', creative play, snack preparation followed by snack time, story and garden time. Some of the creative play takes place outside and older children also have an extended craft period. A weekly 'eurythmy' (art of movement) session supports the children's creative and physical development. Music is an integral part of the curriculum and staff sing with the children throughout sessions. Songs are also used at transition times to prepare children for a change from one activity to another. The curriculum is effective in promoting children's communication skills and personal, social and emotional development. Children learn to concentrate, solve problems and persevere until they have completed their task. This was demonstrated very effectively when a group of older children built a large aeroplane from wooden construction equipment and then proceeded to take a 'flight'. Activities such as snack time provide additional opportunities for learning, for example counting. Parents say that they would like some extra-curricular activities, and the school is beginning to address this.

The school routine runs seamlessly and the children are interested in their various activities. These encourage the children to develop their intellectual, physical and creative skills as well as their capacity for independent work. The children make satisfactory progress and steadily acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills. The wide age range in each group (three to six years) is designed to give the children the experience of learning in a 'family setting'. However, there needs to be additional adaptation of activities to meet the needs and ages of individual children in this wide age range.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory, with some good features. Staff are very kind and supportive and welcome the children warmly into the groups. They provide good role models and give effective support when needed. Children are not hurried into activities but are encouraged to join in when they are ready, which helps them gain security and confidence. The needs of children with learning difficulties and disabilities are well attended to. The staff make regular observations of each child. These are compiled into a profile of their progress that is combined with the Foundation Stage profile. The information is effectively used to support the children's development and progress.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is an essential element of the Steiner philosophy and the school makes satisfactory provision for this area of their development. The children are happy at school and attendance is good. They are serious about their play, saying, 'I love playing, it is what we do here,' and, 'I love playing outside in the garden.' The school provides good opportunities for supporting children's social and moral development. The children

mix well together, are aware of the simple school rules and their behaviour is good. The school is a small 'family' community where everyone is very well known to each other and mutual support is given to all, both children and parents. The children's spiritual and cultural development is promoted satisfactorily through the many opportunities for learning through experience and an awareness of the seasons of the year. Celebrations of festivals throughout the year provide religious and cultural experiences for these young children and they are growing in cultural awareness and harmony. Planned opportunities in the school ensure that children are growing in self-awareness and self-esteem and making a positive contribution to the school and wider community.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Overall, the school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of the children. Health and safety and behaviour policies are implemented effectively. The school is now aware of the latest guidance for safeguarding children, but its policy is out of date and not all staff have received up-to-date training in safeguarding matters. This is currently being remedied. The school is vigilant with regard to fire safety. All staff are trained in first aid and accidents are recorded appropriately. Pupils are well supervised at all times. The school has a policy with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. The admission and attendance registers are kept according to regulations but staff need to ensure that the attendance registers are always filled in promptly at the beginning of each session. The children eat healthy wholesome food which they help to prepare and they are made aware of the need for exercise.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has made appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. It has a single central record of these checks that meets current government requirements.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school is located in church premises and has the use of two classrooms, which are suitable and attractive learning environments. The rooms are in multiple use and one has to be cleared after each session. They are in satisfactory decorative order and are well equipped for the Steiner curriculum with appropriate resources and furniture, which are used well. There is a secure outdoor play space, which is an oasis in the middle of a busy area of London. It is well equipped for practical adventures: children can make a willow shelter, climb on the wooden frames or dig in the sand. The school has adequate arrangements for children who are unwell.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents, carers and others with a good range of information. The parents' handbook contains all the information required by the regulations. In

addition the school provides detailed information on the curriculum, regular newsletters, a notice board and a website. The parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the school.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a set of procedures, which is available to parents and meets 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 staff receive safeguarding training and update the policy in line with DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007)* (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

## 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 the attendance registers are marked at the beginning of the session.
- Vary the class routines and provide additional activities to ensure that the needs of all children are met.

## School details

Name of school	North London Rudolf Steiner School		
DCSF number	309/6067		
Unique reference number	102169		
Type of school	Steiner		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1985		
Age range of pupils	2.5 – 7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 15	Girls: 6	Total: 21
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 8	Girls: 13	Total: 21
Number of children receiving nursery funding	Boys: 11	Girls: 13	Total: 24
Annual fees	£ 2,592 – £ 3,240		
Address of school	1–3 The Campsbourne Hornsey High Street Hornsey London N8 7PN		
Telephone number	0208 3413770		
Email address	<a href="mailto:Info@rudolfsteiner.london.sch.uk">Info@rudolfsteiner.london.sch.uk</a>		
Headteacher	Ms Janet Quartermain, chair of the college of teachers		
Proprietor	Ms Sue Peat		
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton		
Dates of inspection	4–5 October 2007		