

# Willington School

## Independent School

### Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	315/6080
Unique Reference Number	101069
Inspection number	320409
Inspection dates	23-24 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland

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](http://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

Willington School is an independent day school for boys from 4 to 13 years of age. There are 232 pupils on roll. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need but a small number have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a few have English as an additional language. The school was first established in Putney in 1885 and moved to its current premises in 1990. It is located in a built-up residential area in Wimbledon in south-west London. The school mainly prepares pupils for entry into independent senior schools.

The school aims not only to '*promote the best academic standards*' but also stresses '*individuality within a disciplined environment*'. The school wants the boys '*to be socially adept, confident and, not least, nice to each other and to people around them*'.

The school was previously inspected by the Independent Schools Council in May 2002. The school's nursery provision was inspected by Ofsted's Children's Services in January 2005. This is the school's first full inspection by Ofsted.

## Evaluation of the school

The majority of the parents and the pupils are positive about Willington School. In many respects it is a good school which provides a good education and a satisfactory quality of care. It is particularly successful in promoting the moral and social aspects of the pupils' personal development and in equipping its pupils to be happy and to attain standards which enable them to transfer to the senior schools of their choice. As a result of the good curriculum and teaching, and because the pupils are known well by their teachers, they become confident and articulate learners who make good progress. The school meets most of the regulations but fails to make adequate checks on the suitability of staff to work with children.

## Quality of education

The curriculum provides for pupils of all abilities to make good progress and is of good quality overall. The small number who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or have English as an additional language are catered for well. Lessons for the younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 are mainly taught by class teachers. As the

children move through the school they increasingly receive specialist teaching in all subjects.

Throughout the school, the curriculum is broad and balanced. It meets the needs of all pupils, who are helped to acquire good speaking, listening, writing and mathematical skills. The curriculum is enriched by very good language provision with French, Spanish and Latin taught, as well as good art and music. Effective schemes of work show that teachers plan to challenge the most able as well as support those with specific educational or linguistic needs. Schemes of work reveal that appropriate work is planned with clear progression in learning throughout the key stages. Resources are generally good and are used well.

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is normally through classroom teaching and the use of specialist facilities, although such provision has been largely in abeyance since the beginning of building works. As a consequence, too few opportunities have been made available for pupils to develop their ICT skills. Elements of personal, social, and health education (PSHE) and citizenship are provided through science and religious education (RE) and these contribute well to pupils' personal development. Although satisfactory overall, aspects of PSHE are underdeveloped and the content of RE centres too narrowly on Christianity with too little attention given to other major religious traditions.

The curriculum is enriched very effectively by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, including squash, tennis, judo, choir and chess, as well as visits and visitors. The curriculum prepares pupils successfully for the next stage of their education. Their good progress in English and mathematics supports very effectively their future well-being.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. Lesson planning is securely based on longer term planning. The teachers establish successfully a calm, purposeful and respectful atmosphere in the classrooms and foster effectively the pupils' enjoyment of school and their positive attitudes towards learning. The small classes ensure that the teachers come to know each pupil well and they allow them to provide good support for individuals in need of help and guidance. As a result, the pupils feel safe and comfortable in lessons. They respond positively to instructions and are eager to answer questions and to offer their views. They concentrate very well in lessons and are keen to complete the tasks given to them. The pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent. Their enjoyment is amply demonstrated by the high levels of engagement in all learning activities.

The strengths of the teaching include effective questioning with a range of different pupils invited to reply, the provision of clear instructions and good explanations and the maintenance of a brisk pace during the lesson. The pupils are managed well and are provided with a good level of challenge and individual support. In one mathematics lesson for the most able mathematicians, different work was provided for those who worked the fastest and good individual support was given to slower

pupils and those who had been absent and missed work. The pupils reported that lessons are pitched 'just about right' and that they do get help when they encounter difficulties. Praise and encouragement are used well to motivate and to encourage. There is an appropriate focus on developing the pupils' skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They make good progress overall because of the good curriculum and teaching which provides effectively for differing needs and abilities.

Where the teaching is less strong, the lesson planning sometimes lacks sufficient detail about what the teacher expects the pupils to learn. The intended outcomes are not always sufficiently precise or shared with the pupils, so that they are clear what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. These outcomes are rarely written on the board. Too few lessons have effective endings which revisit the lesson objectives to ascertain how far pupils have made the expected gains and to help to consolidate learning. In these lessons there is too little use of the whiteboards to log the key points that arise, to reinforce the teaching and to support the learning of less able pupils.

The school has a policy and provides helpful guidelines to staff on marking, which is regular in the majority of subjects. In some subjects, and especially in English, it is usually detailed and contains comments not only on the quality of work but also provides clear indications to the pupils as to what they need to do to improve. However, this is not a consistent practice in all subjects and classes.

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

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with the moral and social elements being the strongest.

Pupils' spiritual development is developed satisfactorily, although there are comparatively few opportunities for them to reflect on their ideas and actions. Pupils are confident, self-assured and articulate because of the friendly ethos that has been created in the school. They welcomed inspectors in a warm and friendly fashion. Throughout the school, behaviour is very good. Pupils attend regularly and approach lessons with good levels of interest and concentration. They respond well to praise and co-operate readily with their teachers and one another. They enjoy their learning, have positive attitudes towards school and take pride in their work.

The teachers have high expectations of behaviour which helps the pupils to develop a clear sense of right or wrong. The pupils are successfully helped to develop into lively and responsible young people who are able to think for themselves and unafraid to express their views.

Pupils make a good contribution to their own community through the good opportunities for them to take responsibility in school, for example through the house and prefect system. However, the pupils do not have any significant say in the running of the school and have no opportunity to express their views or make a

contribution to improving school life. Although they are encouraged to learn about public institutions, there is no channel, such as a school council, to provide them with a 'voice' which might give them a good experience of the workings of a democracy.

Pupils come from a very wide number of cultures and languages and get on very well together. There is a high degree of racial harmony. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to learn in lessons about different cultures in the United Kingdom (UK) or abroad. Pupils' knowledge of non-European traditions is underdeveloped. However, their cultural development is particularly good in art and music and an extensive programme of visits and visitors contributes well to their personal development. Pupils have good literacy, numeracy, ICT and inter-personal skills, which prepares them well for the next stage of their education and makes an effective contribution towards their future economic well-being.

### Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory overall. Although, in practice, the school provides well in most respects for the pupils' welfare, health and safety and has created a caring environment, the overall provision is only satisfactory because the school has not undertaken the full range of checks to ensure the suitability of all staff to work with children and young people. In addition, although the school has an appropriately trained member of staff responsible for safeguarding children, the staff have not undertaken the required recent training in child protection procedures.

There is a series of policy documents, most of which meet requirements, although some have not been reviewed and updated recently. The pupils have regular opportunities for exercise and make good use of local facilities. They know about the importance of healthy eating and safe and healthy lifestyles. The provision for physical education (PE), a range of clubs and opportunities to go swimming supports this awareness. There is an appropriate behaviour policy with a suitable system of sanctions to deal with incidents of inappropriate behaviour. There have been no serious incidents which have led to sanctions. Pupils report that there is little bullying. The size of the school ensures that the staff know the pupils well and can supervise them effectively at all times. There is appropriate provision for first aid and many staff are qualified to administer it. First aid boxes are stocked appropriately and accidents are recorded carefully. The school has made the necessary provision for fire safety. The health and safety policy is appropriate and includes risk assessments for visits. The school maintains an admission register correctly but the attendance registers are not kept strictly in accordance with requirements. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and has recently installed a lift to provide good access to all floors of the school building.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff have been checked under List 99 for their suitability to work with children. The appropriate steps have been taken with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to begin checks of all staff, but these are still in the early stages of completion. No checks have been undertaken on staff who come from outside the European Union. Too few of the further range checks now required have been undertaken to ensure the suitability of all staff to work with children and young people. The school does not maintain a single central record of these checks. The school has not given this aspect of its work sufficiently high priority and has not kept adequately up-to-date with current legislation and national guidance to ensure that the regulations are met.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school occupies large, detached premises which have been modernised and extended to provide a safe and effective learning environment. A further extension is underway and is close to completion. The school building is in a generally good condition and is well maintained; the interior of the building has been decorated well. The school possesses a number of specialist facilities, including a science laboratory, small music practice rooms and a library. Although some classrooms are small they are adequate for the number of pupils in each class and are clean and bright. The school does not have appropriate facilities for pupils who are unwell. It makes good use of local sports facilities to supplement its own limited facilities for PE and games.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Although brief in scope, sufficient useful information to meet all the regulations is contained in the prospectus and accompanying set of notes. It includes an expression of the school's aims and ethos and a list of all staff, as well as providing information about school policies which are available on request.

Most parents report that they are happy with the quality of the information they receive and with the progress that their children make. They receive detailed reports at the end of the autumn and summer terms along with brief reports at the end of each half term. The annual reports provide a satisfactory amount of information on each curriculum subject but there is some variability in quality. The information the school provides for parents on their children's work does not make sufficiently clear for parents what standards their children have attained in relation to general age-related expectations, whether they are making the progress of which they are capable and if they are making enough effort to do well.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a written complaints policy which sets out the procedures it will follow in the management of any complaint. It contains information on all of the

specific elements required by the regulations. There have been no formal complaints from parents.

## 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:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school by providing training for all staff, in compliance with DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- ensure that the admission register and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

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

- ensure that prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff (including volunteers), it makes appropriate checks to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the UK, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and takes this information into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- ensure that an enhanced criminal records check is made by the proprietor in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the school and that it is obtained before or as soon as is practicable after his/her appointment (paragraph 4(2)(b))
- ensure that it obtains, in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the UK, a certificate to establish his or her suitability to work in a school and further checks as the proprietor considers appropriate having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 4(2)(c))
- ensure that the chairperson has checked the other members of the proprietorial body to confirm their identity, right to work in the UK, enhanced



CRB check, or where appropriate gained confirmation that he/she does not contravene section 142 of the 2002 Act (a) (paragraph 4B(4 and 5))

- ensure that for each member of staff in post on or after 1 August 2007, the register shows checks made (and certificates obtained where relevant) of: his/her identity; qualifications (where required); whether an enhanced CRB was obtained, or where appropriate, that he/she is not working in contravention of section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (List 99); the right to work in the UK and, where relevant for those who have lived outside the UK, suitability to work in a school along with the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(2 and 3))
- ensure that the register shows that a check was made on each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor in post on or after 1 August 2007 of: his/her identity; right to work in the UK; and whether an enhanced CRB check was carried out and certificate obtained, or where appropriate, confirmation that he/she is not barred from working in school under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 and the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(6 and 7))
- ensure that the register is kept in electronic form, provided that the information so recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form (paragraph 4C(9)).

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

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

## Inspection of funded nursery education

### Effectiveness of the funded nursery education

The provision is good.

The quality of teaching and learning for four-year-olds that are in receipt of funding for nursery education is good. The practitioners have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and are able to promote the children's learning in all six areas very well, usually through using topics and themes. They present interesting and worthwhile activities that are planned well to help children move along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals at their own pace. Children's individual learning needs are well recognised because the staff know the children very well and are effectively observing and recording each child's progress. Staff appropriately support children that may have learning difficulties and work closely

with their parents and outside professionals when necessary.

All of the six areas of learning are well promoted especially children's communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills. Children have planned opportunities for physical activities, but do not have easy access to outside play and resources as their classroom is on the first floor. The boys behave well and understand the routines and rules of the setting, but at times can be quite boisterous as they require more space and opportunities to move and play freely. They have weekly religious education lessons, but their access to activities and resources to help them learn to value diversity is fairly limited. The boys are encouraged to be polite and to consider the needs of others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The setting is committed to working closely with parents and encouraged them to be involved in their children's learning. They are kept very well informed of children's progress and achievements at parents' evenings and meetings, through informal discussion, and reports. The boys take home reading and sounds books to share with their parents. Leadership and management of the setting is good. The experienced staff work closely with their colleagues in the reception classes and are supported by the senior management in their efforts to provide a high standard of inclusive nursery education. The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

## Recommendations or actions to improve the funded nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of the nursery education the registered person should take account of the following recommendations:

- provide children with more opportunities for outside and physical activities so that they can move freely, climb, balance and use challenging play resources.

## School details

Name of school	Willington School	
DCSF number	315/6080	
Unique reference number	101069	
Type of school	Boys Preparatory School	
Status	Independent	
Date school opened	1885	
Age range of pupils	4-13	
Gender of pupils	Boys	
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 232	
Number of children receiving funded nursery education	Boys: 23	Total: 23
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,320-£8,520	
Address of school	Worcester Road Wimbledon London SW19 7QQ	
Telephone number	0208 944 7020	
Fax number	0208 944 9596	
Email address	office@willingtonschool.co.uk	
Headteacher	Mr Graham Hill	
Proprietor	Willington School Foundation Ltd	
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland AI	
Childcare inspector	Doreen Forsyth	
Dates of inspection	23-24 January 2008	