

Parkgate House School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	212/6397
Unique Reference Number	101091
URN for registered childcare and social care	EY500292
Inspection number	329571
Inspection dates	17 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell

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). The inspection of childcare was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focussed principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Parkgate House School was established in an attractive listed building overlooking Clapham Common in 1986 by its present principal. It provides education for boys and girls between 2 and 11 years of age. There are currently 159 full-time pupils on roll in the Pre-Prep and Prep departments, and 67 in the nursery who attend on a part-time basis. No children between the ages of 3 and 4 are funded under the Nursery Scheme. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs, although the school provides support for pupils who may experience particular difficulties with learning. The school emphasises its aim of providing 'a nurturing environment, which changes as the child develops' with 'emphasis on individual excellence, be it academic, artistic or sporting'. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2005.

Evaluation of the school

Parkgate House School is a successful school where pupils are happy and where the parents overwhelmingly endorse it by expressing their satisfaction with both the learning and nurturing environment provided for their children. The quality of education is good and has a number of outstanding features; the children benefit from the rich range of learning opportunities provided throughout the school by its extensive curriculum. As a result the children make outstanding progress and all are successful in attaining places in schools of their choice for the next stage of their education. Relationships within the school between staff and pupils are excellent and this supports the very positive learning environment that exists. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is outstanding and they are cared for exceptionally well. The school has implemented the one remaining requirement identified by the last report and now meets all the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum provided by Parkgate House School is outstanding for pupils of all ages. The curriculum is considerably broader than the National Curriculum and includes French from the Early Years, Latin and from this academic

year violin lessons for all pupils in the Reception class. Pupils take part in a range of sports and team games. The school day is considerably longer than the guideline set as a minimum by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Pupils thrive as they move through the school, make outstanding progress in relation to their ages and by Year 6 are very well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education. In addition to the range of opportunities provided by the curriculum, pupils can join a wide number of clubs and take part in other activities. A notably large percentage of the children take part in after school clubs. The development of such interests is given a high priority by the school as a component of a child's whole development. The range of activities is augmented by an interesting range of school trips.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and has a number of very strong features. A majority of the lessons observed in the Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory years were judged to be of outstandingly high quality. The high quality of teaching, combined with the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning, ensures that they make rapid progress. The best teaching includes a number of strong features: questioning which challenges pupils to think independently and lessons that are well structured. Such lessons make the best use of learning opportunities and include a thoughtfully devised range of teaching strategies, which sometimes make good use of interactive white boards. Throughout the school the range of teaching resources is good and in some respects excellent. In a minority of classes the structure and content of the lesson is planned in insufficient detail to ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged. Most teachers show appropriately high expectations of what pupils can do, and they are rarely disappointed. Good teaching and the positive learning environment created in classrooms and the school as a whole, encourage pupils to develop a genuine interest in learning. Effective classroom management and high expectations of behaviour are sensitively used from the earliest years. As a result pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning and, amongst the oldest, a notably mature involvement in their work. Pupils frequently demonstrate good organisational skills and independent thought.

Assessment is good throughout the school and has a number of outstanding features. The school management understands the importance of monitoring pupils' achievement and tracking their progress as they move through the school. Good records are maintained of individual pupil's progress which can then be used to plan the curriculum and identify where individual support is required. Importantly the school management understands how to use the data that it collects from tests and other activities to good effect. The school is now beginning to use target setting as a further aspect of its continuing efforts to support the progress made by pupils of all ages and abilities. The school makes good use of a range of strategies to support those pupils who are identified as having some degree of learning needs. An appropriate range of expertise and assessments are carefully used to support the development of appropriate plans to guide teachers and, where necessary provide additional help. The school maintains good records in relation to the support that it provides in this respect and ensures that helpful Individual Education Plans are provided to identify and direct support for particular pupils.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school supports the development of their self-esteem and self-confidence effectively through the range of activities provided. It uses effective strategies to identify where additional support and encouragement is needed to raise individual pupils' confidence. The positive attitude adopted by teachers encourages pupils to explain their thoughts and ideas. They often use questioning effectively to this end. They usually listen to what pupils say and their responses to pupils generally reflect the positive.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They frequently show thoughtfulness and maturity beyond their years. Their positive response and attitudes to learning are an important feature in supporting the progress that they make. The school makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' social as well as communication skills. They are encouraged to consider the feelings of others and to understand the difference between right and wrong.

The school encourages pupils to be aware of their local community and the larger world community through contributions to charities. Pupils are active participants in raising money on these occasions. They become aware of public institutions and services through a range of visits to places of interest, through visits to the local fire station and occasional visits to the school by members of the local community, including the police. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about other cultures, both through the school curriculum and links with other countries. They learn about different religions and develop natural attitudes to harmony and tolerance towards other cultures. Their interest in the arts is strongly supported by opportunities provided by the school. Overall, the rich range of opportunities provided for the children ensures that they enjoy being at school and that they are well prepared for their future lives.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The quality of care provided for pupils is outstanding. Pupils say that they like being at the school and that they feel well cared for. The high quality of practice and procedures used by the school to support welfare, health and safety are effectively underpinned by a full range of carefully designed and maintained policies and guidance documents. The thorough approach to all aspects of welfare, health and safety is emphasised by the range of training provided for staff, including in relation to child protection. The need for checks on all adults who have contact with children are thoroughly understood and the legal requirements systematically applied.

The health and personal development of the pupils is very well served by the provision of high quality organic meals, readily available water and the wide range of sporting and recreational opportunities available. The high quality of care received by their children was unanimously acknowledged by parents in questionnaires returned to inspectors. A minority of parents indicated that they did not understand the

school's procedures for handling complaints, but inspectors found these details to be both clear and readily available from the school. The school has fully addressed the issues raised by their last Ofsted report in relation to complaints procedures.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall quality and standards of the Early Years education is good. Children in the school's nursery enjoy an excellent start to their school career and benefit from a hard working team of staff who ensure that each and every child is provided with excellent care and welfare. Their introduction to the nursery is carefully planned and delivered. Children feel safe and happy and are helped to learn and develop well. They are provided with a wide range and variety of play and learning experiences which encourage progress in all areas of their learning.

The curriculum successfully incorporates all six areas of learning as well as elements of Montessori planning which complement curriculum activities, ensuring that pupils benefit from learning opportunities that are well matched to their individual needs. There are opportunities for pupils to make choices in their activities and work cooperatively with one another. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in reading and speaking and listening. Pupils are taught to form letters and numbers correctly and this provides them with a firm basis to further develop their handwriting skills. Children demonstrate that they are beginning to confidently recognise and write numerals, as well as sequence and compare numbers. The majority of children achieve excellent outcomes in the main areas of their learning especially in literacy.

Children benefit from the close partnership between parents and staff. Parents are kept informed about what is taught and their child's progress in both the nursery as well as Reception. Staff know their children well and regularly evaluate activities in order to assess individual progress. The school's effective systems of assessment and analysis help to ensure that the needs of most pupils are fully met, including those with learning difficulties. Children achieve well due to good teaching, well organised learning opportunities and resources which provide a balance of purposeful indoor and outdoor activities. Nevertheless, some aspects of planning for individual pupils' needs are still to become fully embedded in Reception.

The personal development and well-being of the children in the Early Years is good. Children behave well, form strong friendships and work well together. Good behaviour is promoted through positive behaviour management. They develop good social skills. They communicate well, listening carefully to other children and are self-assured.

The quality of welfare, health and safety of the children is outstanding. They love and are provided with numerous opportunities to celebrate their achievements, to contribute to and learn about their local environment and the wider world. The leadership and management of the Early Years is good and the well organised systems ensure its smooth day-to-day running. Staff work well together.

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:

- fully implement the use of target setting to further support pupils' progress
- provide additional guidance for lesson planning to assure consistently high quality.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	√			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning	√			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of pupils	√			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	√			
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		√		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		√		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		√		
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	√			
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		√		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		√		

School details

Name of school	Parkgate House School		
DCSF number	212/6397		
Unique reference number	101091		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY500292		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1986		
Age range of pupils	2 -11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 67	Girls: 92	Total: 159
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 31	Girls: 36	Total: 67
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 9	Girls: 11	Total: 20
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 10,650		
Annual fees (childcare)	£ 4,500		
Address of school	Parkgate House 80 Clapham Common Northside London SW4 9SD		
Telephone number	0207350 2452		
Fax number	0207738 1633		
Email address	office@parkgate-school.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Trudie Masterson		
Principal/Proprietor	Mrs Catherine Shanley		
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell		
Dates of inspection	17 September 2008		