

Weston Green Preparatory School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	9366556
Unique Reference Number	125437
Inspection number	329695
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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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, the purpose of which is 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

Weston Green is a privately owned co-educational independent school situated in Thames Ditton in Surrey, overlooking the original village green. Established in 1987, it provides for pupils between the ages of three and seven years of age. There are currently 135 girls and boys at the school, of whom 14 attend the nursery. Fifty of the children below the age of 5 attend the school on a part-time basis. There are no children with statements of special educational need, although specialist support is provided for some pupils who experience relatively minor learning difficulties, and none that require support for English as a second language. The school aim is '*every child should enjoy their childhood and that learning should be fun*'. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2005, and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in March of the same year.

Evaluation of the school

Weston Green is a successful school which meets its aims and provides a good quality of education. Children are happy to be at the school and enjoy learning. Parents confirm that their children like the school. Because they are well taught pupils make good progress as they move through the school and most are successful in achieving places at school of their choice to continue their education. The children are well cared for and thrive in the positive learning environment. Improvements have been made since the last inspection by Ofsted and the school now meets all the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. The school is successful in its aim of providing a broad range of experiences that encourage pupils to develop an enthusiasm for learning. It ensures that pupils have access to the full range of learning experiences. The content of the curriculum is suitable throughout the school. It provides opportunities and well focused support to enable pupils of all ages and abilities to grow in confidence, including in their ability to succeed. All subjects of the National Curriculum are studied in Years 1 and 2, with the addition of French for all pupils from the Kindergarten. Pupils have good access to opportunities for physical education both indoors and on the school's playing field. Facilities for information

communication technology (ICT) have recently been improved and the school now makes good provision for this subject.

The school's educational provision is supported by a very good range of planning documents and schemes of work which are carefully kept up to date. This process has been aided by the appointment of a member of staff to co-ordinate each subject, including providing training to other members of staff. Planning and provision for pupils who experience difficulties in learning is detailed and ensures well focused support both by the specialist teacher and throughout the curriculum.

The school provides a good range of extra-curricular and additional activities relative to its size and the ages of the pupils. There are regular clubs for music, games, homework and sports. Informal lunchtime activities are supported by the provision of a range of board games and creative toys provided by the Parents Association. The curriculum is further enhanced by a wide range of visitors to the school, including musicians and several children's authors.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and has a number of outstanding features. Teaching in the majority of lessons is good and some show outstanding features. Teachers work hard to ensure that the needs of individual children are addressed. Throughout the school teachers use consistent classroom management strategies and pupils' behaviour is consequently exemplary. Classrooms provide calm learning environments which enable pupils to thrive, to enjoy their learning and to make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations set by teachers. The positive relationships that pupils have with their teachers, gives them the confidence to ask questions, to express their interest in the new things that they learn and, importantly, not be afraid to be wrong occasionally.

Teachers usually plan their lessons in detail. Overall planning is detailed and supported well by a range of learning resources and guidance. Lessons are invariably well structured and most are conducted at a good pace. The positive response and behaviour of pupils in general is a significant feature in supporting the pace of learning. Good planning, the support provided by effective learning assistants and the generally small class sizes are helpful in ensuring that all pupils receive individual attention as required. Learning assistants work and plan closely with teachers. Throughout the school teaching is supported by a very good range of resources. Teaching and learning have recently been further enhanced by new computers and interactive white boards, which are now provided in every classroom. Teaching is further supported by the range of professional development opportunities made available to staff. Teaching is routinely monitored by school management. Pupils began to be distracted on those occasions when the lesson content was over-elaborate and did not focus on the prime purpose of the activity.

Assessment is good and works effectively within the context of expectations set by the school. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked as they move through the school. Teachers know their pupils well and plan their time to ensure that they are able to

talk to individuals about their work. They maintain very good records of pupils' progress in their classes. Marking is undertaken consistently and provides praise and encouragement to support pupils' growing confidence. Clear and helpful written feedback in pupils' exercise books is relevant to their ages.

Support for pupils who experience difficulties with learning is outstanding. The school policy is focused on identifying need at the earliest opportunity. Support is informed by careful and regular monitoring by teachers and by guidance provided by the specialist special needs co-ordinator. They are supported by further specialist guidance and analysis by outside agencies as required. Individual education plans provided for specific pupils are helpful in guiding classroom teachers in supporting individual pupils. Reviews of pupils' progress are very regular. Importantly these reviews involve parents in line with the school's aim for partnership with parents.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school has a strong Christian ethos that underpins pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Pupils are very confident and welcoming and have very positive attitudes to learning. Their outstanding behaviour reflects their enjoyment of learning. Pupils are happy and parents overwhelmingly endorse this with comments such as, 'The staff instil the importance of manners and courtesy and showing respect for others, and children understand the boundaries'.

Pupils respond positively to the excellent provision for their personal development. Their knowledge of themselves and their self-esteem and confidence are effectively developed. All pupils, including the very youngest, develop a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and show consideration for one another. Relationships at all levels are excellent and positively contribute to the stimulating learning environment. Pupils from different backgrounds work and play in harmony and show respect for different cultures and traditions. They are eager to support those who are less fortunate. For example, they raise money for the Shooting Star Trust and Child Shoe Box Appeal. Pupils respond particularly well to the good provision of visitors enriching their learning, for example, the Circus Workshop, Caribbean Music Workshop, World Book Day, and this contributes well to their spiritual and cultural understanding. Opportunities for the development of pupils' cultural development show significant improvement since the last inspection.

Pupils make very positive contributions to their own school community, for example, through their roles as register monitors. Teachers listen to pupils and take their ideas seriously. Children actively participate in public performances in singing and playing musical instruments. The basic skills they acquire, including their personal skills, prepare them extremely well for their future lives.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school has an outstanding range of policies and procedures for ensuring that all pupils, including children in the EYFS, are safe, secure and healthy. Pupils show a good awareness of how to stay safe at all times. They develop a very good understanding of the need for healthy eating. School snacks include a selection of fruit, milk or water. Active links with local schools and outside agencies effectively support pupils' development, for example, for those with speech and language difficulty. All procedures are in place for child protection and all staff are familiar with the requirements. Health and safety matters are taken seriously and risk assessments are rigorously carried out. Regular checks are made on all the fire and electrical equipment and fire drills regularly carried out.

The high quality care received by children is acknowledged by parents. The school has fully addressed the issues raised by their last Ofsted report; a disability access plan has now been completed which meets all requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and attendance registers are suitably maintained.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school understands and complies with the procedures required for checking staff. All checks undertaken are recorded in an appropriate register. Medical checks are undertaken on all new staff, indicated as a requirement by the last Ofsted inspection.

School's premises and accommodation

The school premises have been used as a school since 1952. The Victorian buildings, which have been extended and added to over a number of years, provide suitable accommodation for the numbers of pupils and have the added benefit of sufficient land to provide space for outdoor games. Specialist facilities include an art room, ICT room and school hall, which doubles as a gymnasium. The recent building of a kitchen has enabled the school to offer nutritious hot meals to children at lunchtimes. Suitable facilities are provided for pupils who may become ill during the school day.

The buildings are very well maintained and provide pupils with a notably attractive learning environment. This is enhanced by the high quality of displays throughout the school. Furniture and fittings are appropriate to their use and to the ages of the children, including the adjustable seating provided for the new computer room. Matters relating to fire evacuation are carefully monitored and supported by regular fire drills.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents and prospective parents with all the required information in the school prospectus and its website. Reports to parents are made twice a year and include very good evaluations of pupils' progress.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints procedure is carefully written to ensure the clarity of its contents. It fully meets the requirement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for the EYFS is good and all the requirements are met in full. Children in the nursery and lower kindergarten receive a good start to their education, with many making particularly good progress from their various starting points. They settle in quickly and clearly love learning in a caring and supportive environment. Teaching is consistently good. Children rapidly gain in confidence because teachers and classroom assistants celebrate their efforts and successes. The development of speaking and listening has a high profile. Children 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. Children in the kindergarten and Reception enjoy French lessons.

Arrangements for children's care and welfare are outstanding, enabling them to flourish in a safe and secure environment. In most lessons there is an appropriate balance between adult-directed activities and those chosen by the children themselves. However, occasionally, the activities are over-directed and children do not get enough opportunities for independent work. For example, when making clowns or greeting cards, all children's art work looks the same. The outdoor provision is good and used effectively to enhance children's learning in line with their experiences in the classroom. While most teachers are aware of the need to plan their lessons with clear objectives for children's learning, not all focus on these during lessons or use them for assessing how well children have learnt. Children's social and emotional development is outstanding. They work well together in groups and sustain their interest in all activities. Children's progress is assessed regularly and accurately. Procedures for their on-going assessments are well established and provide a clear picture of their needs.

Children benefit from the close partnership between parents and staff. Details of children's progress and any problems they may encounter are communicated promptly to parents and carers. The leadership and management of the EYFS are good and the well organised systems ensure its smooth day-to-day running. Staff work well together and are very clear about the planned future developments.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development:

- provide training for all teachers to ensure the developing use of interactive whiteboards to further extend the range of teaching and learning opportunities for pupils
- provide more planned opportunities for children to work independently and take initiative in the EYFS to enable them to consolidate learning.

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	Weston Green Preparatory School		
DCSF number	9366556		
Unique reference number	125437		
Type of school	Pre-Preparatory		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1987		
Age range of pupils	3-7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 45	Girls: 40	Total: 85
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 27	Girls: 23	Total: 50
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6660.00		
Address of school	Weston Green Road Thames Ditton Surrey KT7 0JN		
Telephone number	0208398 2778		
Email address	info@westongreenschool.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs L Harvey		
Proprietor	Weston Green School Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell		
Dates of inspection	1–2 December 2008		