

Lord's Independent School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	3506000
Unique Reference Number	105269
Inspection number	330026
Inspection dates	23-24 September
Reporting inspector	Peter Toft HMI

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

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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, 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

The school is a co-educational independent school for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 years. It currently has 64 pupils on roll. It is located in the centre of Bolton. It was founded as a commercial college in 1906 and became a secondary school in 1975. The school has been owned by Lord's College Ltd since 1992. It was last inspected in June, 2005.

The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and prepares pupils for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Most leavers go on to sixth form or further education in the area.

The school aims to: reach the highest standard of attainment; develop self confidence, independence and adaptability; develop respect for others and the environment; help pupils feel safe; and provide a stimulating and supportive learning environment, teaching of the highest standard and a caring and secure place of learning.

Evaluation of the school

Lord's Independent School offers a good quality of education. Key strengths include the very good level of pastoral and academic support provided within the school's small classes and the good teaching. Pupils feel safe in the building and are well looked after by the staff; they behave well and relationships are good. Although the school is very small, it offers a broad academic curriculum and a good range of GCSE courses. The school has improved its provision in recent years.

Quality of education

Despite its small size, the school provides a good curriculum. It is based on a broad range of academic subjects including some chosen specifically to enrich pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being, for example, information and communication technology (ICT), business studies and law. The academic subjects provided are, in the main, adequately resourced and this supports the good subject teaching. Resources for science are limited, however. Music and design and technology are not provided for at all and geography is only taught in Years 7 to 9.

Basic skills in English, mathematics and computing are well taught and pupils make good progress. Citizenship, personal, social and health education and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are provided for in part through subjects such as science and physical education (PE). They are also covered informally: the civilised ethos and excellent relationships of the school provide a good basis for personal development. However, the aims of these aspects of the curriculum are not effectively supported by the short daily form periods. In the small classes and with the encouraging teaching, pupils of all abilities and ethnic groups make good progress. This is a significant strength of the school. Appropriate careers guidance is provided by Connexions and a wide range of providers of sixth form and further education advise pupils in Year 11. The curriculum is well planned to meet the pupils' interests and the wishes of parents. Timetabling is efficient and adequate time is provided for the academic subjects. Extra-curricular activities are very limited in scope. No additional activities take place after 3.00pm. Provision for team sports is limited by size of school but all students take a GCSE in PE.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. Teaching in the great majority of lessons seen was good and was satisfactory in the others. The key elements of this good quality include: the subject expertise of staff which ranges from good to excellent; the capacity of the small staff to cover between them a broad range of subjects; the willingness of pupils to engage, listen, respond to teachers' questions and prompts, and their clear assumption that there is significant value to be gained in their future lives from a good education; excellent relationships; the detailed attention which teachers give to individuals in the small classes, either to explain further until they understand or to respond in detail to individual points and questions raised by pupils; good attention to correct technical language; and adequate time being set aside for revision to consolidate learning. Lesson planning is satisfactory and those lessons observed were well sequenced to promote steady pupil progress. In most lessons there is a good variety of activities to inspire pupils' interest. In some, staff have good discussions with pupils which help them develop skills and understanding. The satisfactory lessons were heavily teacher directed and dependent on the text book, and made limited demands on pupils to think, express their thoughts and take the initiative. Pupils' enjoyment and participation is restricted in some lessons by the limited range of learning resources and activities. Teachers have a clear idea of how well pupils are learning mainly through the detailed interactions which take place in the small and busy classes. This is supported by appropriate marking and testing. A quarter of parents responding to the inspection questionnaire did not agree that they were adequately informed about their children's progress. The school runs one parents' evening per year together with a detailed annual report and interim reports when necessary.

As a result of the very good ethos of the school, the quality of the teaching and the attitudes of the pupils, progress is good throughout the school. The progress seen in lessons, and that indicated by the quality of the pupils' work over time, is good. Results in the GCSE examination are above average. Pupils are very secure in this environment and this clearly supports their good learning. They develop into

confident and articulate young people, well prepared for further study. The vast majority go on to sixth form or further education.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour is good and they have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils cooperate well with one another, as seen during a debating session in Year 9. Positive relationships between everyone in the school create a happy, family atmosphere. Pupils say that they were made to feel welcome when they joined the school and this helped them to settle quickly. Spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily through general studies and other opportunities in the curriculum, though there is no specific religious education provision.

Pupils contribute to those less fortunate than themselves through a variety of fundraising activities, for example, Red Nose Day, Children in Africa and Chernobyl. The school fosters good relationships which enable pupils of difference cultures to get on well with each other. Pupils state that there is no racism in the school. They clearly show respect for others.

Most pupils state that they enjoy school and their attendance is good. The roles of head boy and girl, together with the prefect system, promote the pupils' understanding of social responsibility. The school celebrates the pupils' efforts with presentations each term with merit certificates and prizes.

The pupils in Year 10 have a two-week period of work experience and a business studies course is taught to GCSE level. These experiences help prepare the pupils for their future economic well-being. The good provision for developing speaking and listening skills together with reading, writing and mathematical skills also helps pupils to find their way in the world of employment. They are encouraged to understand how public institutions work, for example, by visiting a local magistrates court.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school has made good provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. It is a safe place in which to work and learn. There is a range of appropriate policies, which have been implemented effectively; these include anti-bullying, welfare, health and safety of pupils on visits outside school, behaviour and child protection. The named child protection officer has had appropriate training and all the staff are up-to-date with current training. The behaviour policy emphasises a positive approach to managing behaviour and the pupils' behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. All pupils' activities both on and off the school site have had thorough risk assessments.

The science curriculum places appropriate emphasis on the pupils' health and encourages pupils to take care of their bodies and keep safe. Healthy eating is

promoted. However, opportunities for physical activities are very limited by the accommodation and lack of outside space at breaks and during the school day.

The pupils feel safe in school. The school is vigilant in ensuring fire safety and all fire risk assessments and checks have been carried out thoroughly. The school has held two fire drills in 2008 and details have been recorded correctly. Health and safety risk assessments have been carried out for all areas of the school. The school works well with parents to promote the pupils' well-being by, for example, sharing relevant information on any medical conditions. Good provision is made for first aid with a detailed policy and fully-trained staff. Pupils are well supervised at all times when they are on school premises. The admission and attendance registers are kept according to regulations. The school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Procedures for checking the suitability of all staff to work with children are well established and thorough. They meet regulatory requirements.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is based in small premises converted from houses. Space is adequate for the lessons and courses taught and classrooms are of a satisfactory size. A room is set aside for joint use as an art studio and science laboratory, though the amount and range of equipment for science is limited. Resources for ICT are adequately provided in another specialist room. Good games facilities are used in a nearby leisure centre. The small dining room is also used as a common room and is adequate in size for both purposes. The school does not adequately meet the requirements to provide appropriate outside space for pupils to play safely and suitable facilities for those who are ill.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Information is provided to parents in documents, on the school website and orally. The school brochure is informative and, together with the website, provides all of the information to meet regulatory requirements. Parents are invited to contact the school for information and many appreciate this, as indicated in their responses to the inspection questionnaire. A good range of policies covers all major areas of the school's work and parents can request copies of these from the school. The school's provision is accurately explained in the brochure which is supplemented by a useful handbook made available to all parents. Annual reports to parents are informative and well grounded in assessments of pupils' progress. Parents' evenings are held annually. A quarter of those parents responding to the inspection questionnaire stated that they received too little information on their children's progress.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has sound procedures for handling complaints which meet regulatory requirements. Parents are informed that they can request a copy from the school. No formal complaints have been received in the last year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), with the exception of those listed below.

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))
- improve arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Improve the extent to which parents are informed about the progress being made by their children.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

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		√		
--	--	---	--	--

School details

Name of school	Lord's Independent School		
DCSF number	350/6000		
Unique reference number	105269		
Type of school	Secondary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1906		
Age range of pupils	11-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 38	Girls: 26	Total: 64
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3228-£4465		
Address of school	53 Manchester Road Bolton Lancashire BL2 1ES		
Telephone number	01204 523731		
Fax number	01204 523731		
Email address	info@lordsschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Ainsworth		
Proprietor	Mrs Zoe Whittle		
Reporting inspector	Peter Toft HMI		
Dates of inspection	23-24 September 2008		