

Ravenstone Preparatory School and Nursery

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	207/6404
Unique Reference Number	134864
URN for registered childcare	343116
Inspection number	330444
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI

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

The inspection of registered provision¹ was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

Information about the school

Ravenstone Preparatory and Nursery school was opened in October 2003 and became one site under new proprietors in June 2006. The headteacher was appointed at that time. There has been considerable refurbishment and enhancement to most areas of the building since then. The school operates from a six storey premises in South Kensington, London and is registered to take pupils up to the age of 11. Currently, there are 109 children aged between 18 months and 9 years. 43 children receive funding for early years education. The school is non-denominational and children and staff come from many countries, with a rich variety of cultural and religious backgrounds. Most children are learning English as an additional language. No pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school was last inspected in December 2005 and the early years provision in March 2007.

The school aims to ensure all children are '*happy and self assured; love coming to school and thoroughly enjoy learning*'. Most pupils go on to independent schools both locally and further afield.

Evaluation of the school

Ravenstone School successfully meets its aims. It provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The commitment of staff to the needs of all children underpins the good quality of care and personal development and ensures children and pupils make good progress overall. Teaching is satisfactory with some good features. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is satisfactory. The school meets nearly all regulations and has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

¹ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory with a number of good features. It provides many interesting learning experiences across the academic, aesthetic and practical areas of learning for children in the EYFS although this is more limited in Years 1 to 4. The curriculum encourages good personal development, ensuring children and pupils are confident when facing new challenges. The emphasis given to acquiring confidence in using English, and the development of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy ensures pupils make good progress overall in these aspects of their learning. The provision for pupils has been strengthened since the last inspection through a specialist room for information and communication technology (ICT) that supports their independent learning well. Similarly, the provision for physical development has also been improved, with the introduction of indoor tennis and swimming. Children from the Nursery class through to Year 4 learn French, while Mandarin is also on the school curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 4. This combined with the rich variety of cultural backgrounds in the school contributes well to pupils' appreciation and understanding of diversity. Regular visits to the theatre and museums help teachers bring the curriculum to life. The school's location is fully exploited to enhance the curriculum and pupils' learning.

The National Curriculum is used as a basis for planning in Years 1 to 4. However, the quality of planning varies between classes and weekly and daily lesson planning relies too much on teachers' expertise in refining the lesson objectives to meet the range of needs in their classes and extend pupils' skills. Consequently, not all the activities are well matched to the needs of all pupils. There is considerable time given to teaching English, that results in some subjects such as science, humanities and art having insufficient time to cover the curriculum planned and to secure the best possible learning. The pupils themselves comment that they would like to do more science and have more art lessons.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. There are good features in the teaching that contribute to pupils' good progress over time. Excellent relationships are forged between all the staff and children and pupils. Adults know their pupils well and through effective one-to-one support, children and pupils are challenged and encouraged to do their best. The teaching assistants are used well to help children and pupils understand what they have to do. This is beneficial to those recently arrived with little or no English. Teachers use a range of practical tasks that enliven the learning and encourage pupils' independent learning. Agreeing and setting individual targets is becoming established and pupils welcome the fact they know what they have to get better at. This is reinforced through clear, no nonsense marking. Some good work on identifying systematically the needs of those learning English as an additional language contributes to developing English language for communication and consequently, these pupils make good progress. The emphasis given to reading and writing and on speaking and listening skills, through for example displaying vocabulary, ensures pupils receive a good grounding in literacy skills. The teachers put in place effective personal support, which contributes to

pupils' good progress over time. There is sufficient balance in most of the lessons between teacher directed and independent enquiry that maintains pupils positive attitudes to school. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to help with teaching and the broad learning objectives are shared at the start of the lessons. However, questions were not always used well enough to draw out the pupils' learning or extend their thinking during those lessons seen. Assessment arrangements throughout the school have improved. The information on the stages of learning English as an additional language is used well to provide good adult support in lessons and this is helping ensure these pupils make good progress. However, the information is not yet being used consistently to plan activities that are well matched to what individual children and pupils need to learn next. As a result some pupils struggle while others find the work too easy.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The cultural diversity has a positive influence in the school community and is a huge asset both educationally and socially. The school is harmonious and the pupils and children share their experiences and values from their own cultures with impressive ease. Cultural awareness is promoted well through the curriculum which provides pupils with a good understanding of their own and other cultures and respect for the beliefs and life styles of others. Children and pupils are treated with sensitivity and respect by all the adults and this promotes their self-worth, respect and awareness of others. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Staff provide very good role models. The positive rewards promote pupils' understanding of right and wrong and help them to manage their own behaviour towards others. Children's and pupils' social development is particularly good, as they have many opportunities to play together, share their work at school and when out on the many visits. As a result they have very positive attitudes towards school and are respectful and courteous. The pupils enjoy sharing their views about school but at present there are no formal methods to encourage them to take greater responsibility for developments in school. Attendance is generally good and there is no unauthorised absence, as a result of well managed systems.

Pupils acquire a good sense of community and the public institutions around them through participating in local community projects and their many visits. Pupils develop as self-assured and confident individuals, enjoy their learning and are well prepared for the next phase in their education.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Pupils' care, welfare and safety have a high priority. The headteacher has re-written all the policies relating to health and safety and equalities; these are commendable for the guidance they provide to staff and that they are regularly reviewed by staff. Risk assessment is thorough. Pupils and young children are taught to keep safe and

healthy as part of their personal, social and health education. They are encouraged to eat healthy food such as fruit for snacks at their break times and are keen to do so. Pupils say they enjoy the healthy school meals. The pupils enjoy playtimes on the decking or in the studio but this activity is not always well organised. There is no bullying, and no cause for the school to invoke sanctions for serious breaches of discipline. Minor matters are dealt with sensibly. There are good systems to ensure pupils feel safe and pupils say they feel safe in school. The excellent relationships they have built up with their teachers means they always have someone to confide in, if required.

The school meets most of the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act but, at present, has no plan to show how the policy is to be implemented.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school's procedures for the recruitment and appointment of staff meet all the regulations. All staff have been subject to clearance at an enhanced level with the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure they are suitable to work with children. The school maintains, as required, a single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

Classrooms are of satisfactory size for the number of pupils using them. Although the space in one of the pre-nursery rooms is cramped, it is adequate. There are insufficient toilets for the number of children and pupils, and it was drawn to the school's attention that one is poorly sited. The specialist room for ICT is a good improvement since the last inspection and is well used. Another improvement since the last inspection is the lighting in the main hallways but the basement rooms that serve as dining areas are still poorly lit. The school takes appropriate steps to compensate children for the lack of a suitable space for outside play with good use of local parks and outdoor facilities.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents are almost unanimous in their praise for the work of the school. They appreciate the contact they have with the headteacher and care manager, which enables them to discuss any issues or concerns. Parents feel well informed about their children's progress. Pupils' reports and the EYFS profiles contain a good level of detail. The school produces an attractive prospectus which gives a very good overview of its work. However, it does not provide all the required information.

Procedures for handling complaints

The schools complaints policy meets fully all the requirements. There has been one formal complaint in the past year which has been recorded appropriately and was not upheld.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for children from 0 to 5 years is satisfactory with some good features. All six areas of learning and development are covered in the planning and children's learning and development is routinely observed and recorded to show the progress they make towards the early learning goals. The arrangements for liaising between the age groups are not yet fully in place. The school recognises it now needs to extend this to cover all aspects of the EYFS planning to ensure clear progression of learning and development across the whole stage. Most children make good progress towards the early learning goals in relation to their starting point with impressive strides in their personal, social and emotional area of development. Relationships are very positive at all levels and children from different backgrounds and cultures play well together. There is a positive learning atmosphere in all the rooms, which are attractive and welcoming environments. Staff are good role models and take time to spend with each child, valuing them as individuals. Staff make every effort to provide additional outdoor learning experiences through regular trips to the parks and gardens nearby. While the studio room provides a larger area for children to move around there is insufficient organisation for children to get the best out of this experience. The staff give appropriate emphasis to developing the children's communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities although there is some variation on how well this is matched to meet all children's needs. A good range of resources are accessible to the children and discrete play areas in the rooms make a good contribution to their creative and social development. Parents are very pleased with the provision. The children are well cared for; healthy eating is encouraged through the wholesome food provided. The school has commissioned improvements to the area for potty training following this inspection. There is no overall manager for the EYFS to ensure that the high standards of care the school sets itself are monitored across all age groups.

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 sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs, which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that parents are aware they can request particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h))
- make it clear that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils may request details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request particulars of the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 as amended (DDA) the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Further develop the school's management systems to monitor more routinely the quality of the curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning and to improve co-ordination of the provision across the EYFS.
- Continue to develop the use of assessment information to inform the teaching of pupils with differing abilities.

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	Ravenstone Preparatory School and Nursery		
DCSF number	207/6404		
Unique reference number	134864		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	343116		
Type of school	Independent Preparatory with Day Nursery		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	October 2003		
Age range of pupils	1–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 33	Girls: 36	Total: 69
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 25	Girls: 14	Total: 39
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys:25	Girls:20	Total:45
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£10560		
Annual fees (daycare)	£17400		
Address of school	24 Elvaston Place South Kensington London SW7 5NL		
Telephone number	0207 2253131		
Fax number	020 7590 9745		
Email address	head@ravenstoneschoolslondon.com		
Headteacher	Mrs E Heath		
Proprietor	Palatinate Schools Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI		
Dates of inspection	21–22 January 2009		