

Golders Hill School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	302/6063
Unique Reference Number	101377
URN for registered childcare	EY240518
Inspection number	332988
Inspection date	4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

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.

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 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 focused 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

Golders Hill School is an independent co-educational school for children aged from two to seven years of age. The school, which is located on two separate nearby sites in the residential area of Golders Green in north London, was founded in 1908. At the time of the inspection, there were 173 pupils on roll. The school aims to provide 'an education of the highest quality' and to 'not only nurture the child's ability in the traditional subjects but also foster a variety of talents so that each individual can achieve their full potential'. The school's ethos is that 'happiness is essential to the acquisition of knowledge and that learning should always be fun.' Full-time children attend school for approximately six and a half hours a day with younger children finishing 10 minutes earlier. Part-time children in the Nursery attend school for between two to three hours a day depending on their age. There are currently very few children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These include children with speech and language, moderate learning difficulties or specific learning syndromes. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2006.

Evaluation of the school

Golders Hill is a well-established school, which makes good provision for the education and welfare of its pupils. The school achieves high standards and pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Pupils are happy, love coming to school and are proud of their good progress and achievements. Parents are pleased with the efforts the school makes on their children's behalf and, as a result, many pupils go on to a wide range of schools in the area. The school meets all the regulations.

Quality of education

The well-balanced curriculum is good, appropriately planned for most pupils' needs and has improved since the last inspection. Although the school still lacks a whole-school curriculum overview, teacher's individual plans reflect a greater breadth and balance in all subjects ensuring clear progression throughout the school especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The provision of a small information, communication and technology (ICT) suite has gone some way to improve ICT

provision since the last inspection. This is a subject which pupils clearly enjoy, although some of the youngest say how they would appreciate greater access to computers in their classrooms. The good curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities and understand how to stay healthy and safe. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of visits, visitors and enrichment activities such as specialist teaching in French, music, swimming, gymnastics, themed days on such topics as 'Egyptians' and extra-curricular chess. Pupils speak enthusiastically about school visits enjoying the opportunity for hands-on experiences as they did during a recent trip to the Transport Museum as part of a class topic. Although very small classes and a high ratio of adults-to-pupils help to ensure that the curriculum is focused well on pupils' needs, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, not all daily plans provide enough detail about how activities are matched to the pupils' different learning needs. However, where the curriculum is well-focused, particularly in planning for mathematics, reading and speaking and listening, pupils make good, and some make outstanding progress.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. During the inspection, the quality of teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. High expectations by teachers of pupils' work and behaviour, coupled with well-structured and resourced lessons, ensure that most pupils make at least good, and in some cases outstanding, progress. Teachers are positive role models; they motivate pupils to learn and help them to develop independence and self-reliance. Pupils respond well to this and their excellent attitudes and obvious pride are reflected in the purposeful atmosphere and well-presented work throughout the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Teachers know their pupils very well. Consequently, pupils receive appropriately tailored support with their learning. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support in lessons and consequently make good progress from their starting points. In the best lessons, teachers use effective questioning with the good use of open-ended questions which pupils find challenging; this helps extend their knowledge and understanding.

Assessment has also improved since the last inspection. There are now sound systems in place which provide teachers with useful information to evaluate, and track the progress made by pupils. However, the use of this assessment information is not yet fully embedded across the whole school. Consequently, there are a few occasions where activities are not sufficiently matched to meet the needs and levels of ability of each pupil because this information is not always used to plan the next steps in learning. Although pupils are provided with regular feedback about their work and activities, this feedback is not consistent in providing enough information to enable them to know how well they are doing and what they can do to further improve. However, work seen in lessons, pupils' work and the outcomes of activities confirm that most pupils make at least good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils report that they are very happy at school and say, 'everyone looks after you here...' Pupils' positive attitudes are reflected in the school's excellent attendance figures. Pupils are punctual and the vast majority of parents are positive that their children like school. They understand the simple rules which make the school an orderly community, as one parent said 'it is a home from home'. Key values of respect and responsibility are at the heart of the pupils' outstanding behaviour as seen in one kindergarten class where children worked happily together using the class computer, understanding the need to share and take turns. Pupils are polite and friendly to each other at work and play and show that they enjoy being together. They understand right from wrong and are clear that inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable.

The older pupils take their responsibilities seriously, especially those with key responsibilities as head boy and head girl, team captains and as monitors, and appreciate the opportunities they are given to arrange school events and fund-raise. Pupils are aware of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves as seen in a project to raise funds to purchase a bicycle for a local child with learning difficulties. From an early age, the school places a strong emphasis on valuing each pupil and building self-esteem, which it achieves well. School assemblies mark a range of personal achievements and contributions to the school and give pupils time for spiritual reflection. The opportunities for cultural enrichment are good with lessons in religious education and visits to places of worship. All pupils are valued and their individual racial and cultural differences celebrated as seen in projects about Chinese New Year, Diwali, Purim and Christmas. 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.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes outstanding provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, and is a very safe place in which to work and learn. It encourages pupils to be aware of their own safety and well-being by providing a wide range of learning opportunities through the school's PSHE curriculum, as well as through visits to school by for example, a firefighter, a doctor and the police. Pupils say they feel safe. A comprehensive range of health and safety policies is implemented rigorously. The school is aware of the latest guidance for safeguarding children and staff have received up-to-date training in safeguarding matters. All pupils are encouraged to eat healthily at break and lunch time by bringing fruit and healthy snacks to school. Pupils are encouraged to take regular exercise and many report that they love swimming and gymnastics that the school provides as part of its curriculum as well as the compulsory physical education sessions on Friday afternoons. The school is vigilant with regard to fire safety. All areas of the school have been risk assessed and detailed risk assessments are carried out before each visit outside school. The majority of staff are trained in first aid. Accidents are meticulously recorded,

monitored and followed up. Pupils are very well supervised at all times with an exceptionally high ratio of adults-to-pupils both in and out of the classroom. The school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. All of the regulations are met in respect of the checks made on prospective employees with regard to their identity and suitability to work with children, and keeping a single central register of these checks.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It has improved since the last inspection particularly as regards assessment. The statutory framework, especially the curriculum, is well planned and organised. Good, and sometimes outstanding teaching ensures that children achieve well across all areas of learning, particularly in mathematics, creative development and in communication, language and literacy, especially reading. Highly experienced staff ensure that the provision is well matched to children's needs in the very small classes. Staff are caring and have established clear routines and expectations. As a result, children work collaboratively and learn to behave well for their age. Staff are exceptionally rigorous in their monitoring of pupils' welfare. Their attention to detail is seen in the checking by staff that children are happy, purposefully occupied and always safe. Not a second is lost as seen during an informal session during snack time in the Nursery where staff used the matching of pupils' names to a seating and eating plan as a learning opportunity. Children say they appreciate this outstanding level of welfare, health and safety.

The personal development and well-being of the children is good and contributes effectively to good relationships and children's self-confidence as learners. A wide range of activities directed by adults as well as those initiated by the children themselves ensure children are appropriately challenged in their learning. Children show their maturity in their ability to share and take turns. Staff regularly assess children's progress. Where this information is used effectively, both teachers and children are clear about the next steps in learning. However, Foundation Stage profile data is not fully used to maintain a precise overview of progress. Leadership and management are good overall. Day-to-day management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is rigorous. Staff constantly liaise with parents and colleagues so that all are aware of the personal needs of every child. The school has plans to improve outdoor learning so that it complements the good range of indoor activities. As a result of the good progress children make from their above average starting points on entry to school, most of them reach standards that are at or above the levels expected by the end of the Reception year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

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 the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- develop assessment procedures so that children know and understand what it is they have to do to further improve their learning
- make effective use of assessment information so that it informs teachers' future planning and ensures a good range of activities are provided which match the learning needs of pupils with different levels of ability
- develop outdoor learning opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they complement the good indoor activities currently in place.

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	✓			
--	---	--	--	--

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	Golders Hill School		
DCSF number	302/6063		
Unique reference number	101377		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY240518		
Type of school	Co-educational pre-preparatory		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1908		
Age range of pupils	2-7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 68	Girls: 9	Total: 77
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 52	Girls: 44	Total: 96
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 13	Girls: 11	Total: 24
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 5	Girls: 0	Total: 5
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,630 (full time)		
	£5,850 (kindergarten)		
Annual fees (childcare)	£5,850 (3 hour part-time nursery)		
	£3,900 (2 hour part-time nursery)		
Address of school	666 Finchley Road Golders Green London NW11 7NT		
Telephone number	0208 455 2589		
Fax number	0208 209 0905		
Email address	admin@goldershillschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs A T Eglash		
Proprietor	Golders Hill School Limited		
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes		
Dates of inspection	4 March 2009		