

Roxeth Mead School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	310/6064
Unique Reference Number	102254
Inspection number	334893
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton

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

Roxeth Mead School is a small independent pre-preparatory school with a Nursery for pupils aged from three to seven. There are currently 49 pupils on roll, including 14 who attend part-time. The school was founded in 1859. It is situated in Harrow in north-west London in an attractive, converted house with surrounding gardens, including a hard-play area. It is a Christian foundation but there are pupils from other faiths in the school. The school's aim is to maximise each pupil's potential in both their personal and academic development. The school prides itself in the fact that because it is small, it is able to give each pupil the help he or she needs. The school prepares pupils for entrance examinations to local independent preparatory schools. It was last inspected in 2007 when there were a number of regulations that it did not meet.

Evaluation of the school

Roxeth Mead is a happy school which provides a good quality of education and where children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the pupils enjoy their school life. Through using an appropriate curriculum, including the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance, and good teaching, children and pupils make good progress. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school has made good progress in addressing the regulations they did not meet at the last inspection and there is now only one regulation concerning facilities for pupils who are ill that is not met.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and the school has made improvements to the written guidance used by the staff. As the classes are small, the staff can ensure that the curriculum is well matched to the needs of the pupils. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children enjoy a wide range of activities based upon the Early Years Foundation Stage national guidance. They are encouraged to write and read from an early stage and the facilities for outdoor play as part of the curriculum are good.

In the Year 1 and Year 2 classes, pupils experience an increasingly formalised curriculum. Literacy and numeracy are taught daily and the full range of other subjects, at least once a week.

Part of the curriculum is taught through the use of commercial workbooks which are used well. Personal, social and health education is linked effectively with religious education and is also taught weekly through assembly time. Information and communication technology (ICT) is now given more emphasis with a well-equipped suite and more regular use across the curriculum. For example, during a literacy lesson in Year 1, ICT was used to reinforce learning through the use of a simple phonics program. Those pupils who need additional help are supported well during lessons. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are very well supported and make excellent progress in their acquisition of English.

The curriculum is enriched with a range of visits and after-school ballet and French. Some pupils have recently visited the British Library and the Tower of London and there is a whole-school visit to Woburn Safari Park each year. Some parents expressed the opinion that there were few visits outside school but the school carries out a sufficient number. During the inspection pupils were preparing for the end-of-school-year Speech Day at which pupils sing, recite and perform a short musical; this year it is a production of Pinocchio.

The teaching and assessment is good and, as a result, pupils are making good progress, including the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Lessons are mostly teacher led with a planned range of follow-up activities which include some practical applications and then the completion of a worksheet or commercial workbook. Some of the numeracy and literacy is well taught through the use of commercial workbooks, which are effectively used and which the pupils work through at their own rate. The staff know the pupils very well indeed and ensure that they are treated as individuals; they use this knowledge to good use to assess the pupils during lessons. The experienced teachers' have good subject knowledge which engages most of the pupils who concentrate and try hard. There is a relaxed atmosphere in lessons and the pupils are confident to ask for help when they need it. However, a small number of pupils are quite demanding in their wish for attention and can call out for help when they could try a little harder to complete the task on their own. Most lessons proceed at good pace with staff helping individual pupils; however a small minority of lessons lack sufficient pace and this can lead to some time wasting and lack of focus. The pupils have some opportunities for developing their thinking, independent learning and exploratory skills through their lessons. However, there are insufficient opportunities for open-ended and investigative tasks in all areas of the curriculum which will help to encourage more independent thought and problem-solving skills. The pupils complete a considerable number of pieces of work, for example, in numeracy and literacy, but some are repetitious. There are insufficient opportunities for creative writing with the older pupils. The staff have all been at the school for some time and are planning to update their training in the near future.

Resources are sufficient and used well to support learning. The assessment of the pupils work is systematic with the recent introduction of standardised testing and regular testing of spelling, tables and reading.

This information is given to parents in two written reports; there are no formal parents' consultation evenings as parents can make an appointment to see the staff individually. The pupils are well prepared for the entrance examinations for their next school and they report that they are not worried by them because they are confident they know the answers. All the pupils in Year 2 gained a place at the school of their choice for the next academic year.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. This is a happy school where pupils are highly valued and nurtured as individuals. They thrive under the care of kind, experienced staff. Pupils make comments such as 'We learn new things every day...I like the school, it's really old.' The pupils enjoy coming to school as shown by their good attendance and attitude to school. Regular assemblies, religious education lessons and class discussion contribute to the pupils' spiritual awareness. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education. The cultural mix of pupils is celebrated and parents make contributions sharing their cultural heritage. The pupils' behaviour is good with the older ones, including the head boy and girl, taking their responsibilities very seriously to help care for the younger ones. The playtimes are well supervised, fun times in the large attractive play areas at the rear of the school, where the pupils and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage all play well together. The pupils know the difference between right and wrong and follow the simple school rules. They actively help with fund raising for both local and national causes. The older pupils sing at a local home for elderly people and visit them from time to time. Through the curriculum and some visits outside school the pupils are introduced to British institutions and services. The school has very recently celebrated its 150th anniversary, where the pupils re-enacted life in Victorian times.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. The school was required to improve this provision at the last inspection and commissioned professional services to ensure that all areas of the school now meet health and safety guidelines. There is a suitable range of policies which are effectively implemented. These include anti-bullying, health and safety on visits outside school, behaviour and safeguarding. The member of staff responsible for safeguarding has undergone recent training and trained the rest of the staff. The pupils are encouraged to eat healthily, are well cared for and prepared for their future economic well being through their curriculum. There are sufficient staff trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid, and all accidents are recorded. The school is vigilant about fire safety and holds regular, documented fire drills. The admission and attendance registers are kept according to regulations. The school has devised and is implementing a three year accessibility plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school checks all staff to ensure their suitability to work with children and holds the information on a single central register. They now ensure that all the requirements regarding recruitment of staff are met, including a health check.

School's premises and accommodation

The school premises and accommodation enable pupils and children to learn effectively, safely and securely. The school building is attractive and welcoming; with displays of pupils' work celebrating their achievement. The large surrounding grounds are used well for outdoor activities. The school does not have appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, although they are made comfortable until their parents can take them home.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information for parents, carers and others through its newsletters, website, parents' handbook and prospectus. The range of information which parents can request has now been made available. A large number of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and confirmed that they are pleased with the school and their children enjoyed coming. As one parent said 'Roxeth Mead is a beautiful school, perfect for building a strong foundation.' The school day begins at 9am but a significant number of pupils miss register time; this means that some pupils miss the beginning of lessons.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school now has a complaints procedure which meets the regulations and is available to parents.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and fully meets the requirements set out for this age group. The quality of education is good. Appropriate monitoring of the curriculum, teaching and learning, leads to sustained improvement. Children are given a wide range of activities, including literacy and numeracy. Planning is appropriate and helps the children make good progress in their learning because of the good teaching, the stimulating environment and the secure relationships between staff and children. However, there are insufficient open ended, independent and investigative activities available for the children. Assessment tracks individual children's progress well and informs future planning.

Play is purposeful but a large proportion is teacher led, with a limited amount which is initiated by the children. Children show good levels of enjoyment and fully engage in their work. For example, in one session, three children were placing pieces on a jigsaw and they worked well together taking turns to place appropriate pieces on the board. There is good access to outdoor activities, which enhance their learning. Overall, children learn routines quickly, such as washing hands and setting the table for 'snack time'. They communicate well with each other in groups and with adults.

The leadership and management is good. New children settle in well when they join the school. Every child is recognised as unique and planning is related to their starting points and abilities. They behave well and are very keen to learn. Provision for the children's emotional and physical development is good. Their personal development and well being is outstanding because they are encouraged to develop effective relationships with staff and each other. Their welfare, health and safety are also good. The school has a very positive approach to caring for children who need additional help and these children make good progress.

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 the one listed below

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide facilities for pupils who are ill which meets the regulations (paragraph 5(l)).

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 pupils and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with increased opportunities for independent learning to help them develop their skills, especially in problem-solving and exploratory activities

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	Roxeth Mead School		
DCSF number	310/6064		
Unique reference number	102254		
Type of school	Pre-preparatory		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1859		
Age range of pupils	3-7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 19	Girls: 16	Total: 35
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 8	Girls: 6	Total: 14
Annual fees	£6,690		
Telephone number	0208 422 2092		
Fax number	0208 426 4974		
Address	25 Middle Road Harrow. Middlesex HA2 0HW		
Email address	info@roxethmead.com		
Headteacher	Mrs A Isaacs		
Proprietor	Roxeth Mead (Buckholt) Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton		
Dates of inspection	23–24 June 2009		