

Hall School Wimbledon

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	212/6390
Unique Reference Number	101086
Inspection number	334894
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Frater 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

Hall School Wimbledon is a co-educational, independent day school for pupils aged four to 16 years. Currently, there are 534 pupils on roll. The school takes pupils with a range of abilities from Wimbledon and the neighbouring boroughs. A small unit for pupils on the autistic spectrum is situated on site in Ann Margaret House and the school also provides for a small number of pupils with physical impairments. There is a rich diversity of cultures in the school and over twenty three percent of the pupils speak English as a second language. The school was founded in 1990 and is housed on two sites. The junior school (Reception to Year 6) is accommodated in Putney Vale and the senior school (Years 7 to 11) occupies The Downs in Wimbledon.

The school prepares pupils for entrance at ages 7, 8, 11 and 13 to independent schools. Most pupils remain at the school to take GCSE examinations. Due to public and school examinations it was not possible to observe lessons in the senior school during the inspection, although lessons were observed in the junior school. An examination of pupils' work and records of their achievements took place where lessons could not be seen. The mission statement, the 'Spirit of the School', contains a commitment 'to produce the very highest standard of education' and 'to ensure that our children are happy, secure and fulfilled'. The school was last inspected in March 2007.

Evaluation of the school

The school meets its aims. It provides a good quality of education, with outstanding features such as an emphasis on learning how to learn. The curriculum is good with exemplary opportunities for pupils to experience learning first hand, including a range of field studies. Good teaching and assessment promote good progress and enable pupils to reach standards of work that are well above national averages. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Good provision is made for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Pupils say they are very happy and feel safe.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good. The school constantly reviews its curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils. Consequently, the curriculum is good and enhanced by a range of excellent opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills.

For example, pupils in the junior school study a reading and research education programme (RARE). Throughout the junior and senior schools, pupils complete their 'Flints', a very detailed and comprehensive homework programme devised by the school to consolidate and extend learning in lessons. A special feature of the curriculum is the emphasis given to learning through practical experience. This is supported very effectively across the school by a range of field trips, for example to Sussex and Wales. The focus on 'learning how to learn' prepares pupils well for their next stage of education.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. In the junior school, pupils study the National Curriculum with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT), with additional preparation for the 11 plus. Provision is enhanced by specialist teaching in art, music, French, physical education, ballet and drama. The curriculum is extended by a range of enrichment activities using the landscaped school grounds as a starting point and broadening out to the adjacent Wimbledon Common, a wide range of out of school visits, and visitors such as the police and a poet. In the senior school, pupils study the National Curriculum subjects, including art, music and physical education, and also religious studies, drama, and media studies to GCSE. ICT and personal, social and health education are taught appropriately as part of other subjects. In addition, some pupils' needs are met by following the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course. Pupils enjoy the wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, including peripatetic music lessons, choirs and sports activities.

The curriculum is supported well by written documentation, including long term, weekly and daily plans that provide for progression and continuity across the junior and senior schools. Senior school pupils go on to sixth form schools and colleges, but the school does not provide formal careers guidance to help them in selecting appropriate pathways to follow.

From the lessons seen and pupils' work examined, it is evident that teaching and assessment are good and that there are some examples of outstanding practice. From their thorough, regular and accurate assessment of pupils' work, teachers know the needs of individual pupils well. They use this information to plan their lessons, although there are some variations in the quality of planning and teaching. Not all teachers are clearly focused on checking the progress of all pupils during the lesson. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of them. They are eager and always willing to do their best.

Pupils make good progress over time and achieve well above average standards in examinations, including GCSE, because of the good teaching across the school. In the senior school, regular feedback on how pupils can improve their work leads to high achievement in GCSE examinations in subjects such as history. However, 'next steps' to improving their work are not identified for pupils consistently across all subjects and this leads to uneven, although good, achievement.

The provision for pupils with autism is good. The pupils are supported effectively by thorough curriculum planning, based on reviews of their individual education plans each half-term. Teachers monitor in detail pupils' progress and the small steps they make, and use the assessments well to inform lesson planning. Pupils receive very close attention from staff and lessons are structured carefully to provide individual attention. Wherever possible, pupils are integrated sensitively into the main school. The pupils' good progress is illustrated by their growing confidence in applying literacy and numeracy skills. Specialist support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is effective in enabling them to access the curriculum and to make good progress

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils of all ages say they enjoy school immensely and this is evident in their good attendance and positive attitudes. They praise the many educational, cultural and sporting opportunities the school provides for them and appreciate very much the help they are given by their teachers. They feel valued as individuals and thrive in the nurturing, inclusive school ethos. In their year book, Year 11 pupils wrote to the headteacher, 'Hall School Wimbledon (HSW) has given us confidence, security, love, friendships and a belief in ourselves...' In developing pupils' good social skills and team work, in addition to their independent learning skills, the school prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education.

Religious studies including world religions, visits to places of worship, and assemblies contribute considerably to pupils' spiritual awareness and moral development. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and their behaviour throughout the school is outstanding. In valuing the pupils as individuals and treating them considerately and politely, teachers provide good role models. Boys and girls of all abilities, ages and backgrounds work and play together in harmony. Their positive relationships are promoted in all activities, including the very sociable lunchtimes when pupils serve food to each other.

Pupils' cultural understanding, and their knowledge of British institutions and services, is developed well through the wide range of curriculum studies, visits and visitors. For example, pupils in the junior school enjoyed a visit from the police who brought their dogs and horses into the school. A large number of junior and senior school pupils join the school orchestras and choirs, and perform for the local community. Pupils contribute positively to raising funds for local, national and international charities. They are proud to share their cultural heritage through international days and parents contribute to celebrations of festivals such as the Chinese New Year. These events promote inclusion and the excellent personal development of the pupils.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Good provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils promotes their well-being effectively. The staff are very committed to the care of all pupils and know them well. Pupils comment that they feel very safe and can turn to any teacher if they have a concern. Arrangements for their safeguarding are robust and reviewed regularly. All required policies and procedures are now in place and regulations are met. All teachers engage in on-line training, for example, in child protection, health and safety and first aid. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out. Pupils are supervised well in school and on trips. Admissions and attendance registers are maintained suitably. Pupils understand the behaviour policy and procedures and say that sanctions are rarely needed because there is no bullying. Their outstanding behaviour results in a calm environment for learning. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live safe and healthy lifestyles. They eat very healthy meals at school and exercise regularly through their participation in the wide range of sport on offer. The school meets its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and as a result, accessibility of the building has improved.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Procedures for confirming the suitability of the proprietor and staff meet regulations for safeguarding children and include the maintenance of a single central register of the checks undertaken. Procedures for staff recruitment are now robust and include a detailed medical fitness check and two written references.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation enable pupils to learn effectively and safely. Imaginative landscaping of the grounds and an adventure playground at the junior school promote successfully pupils' exploration and appreciation of the environment. The school is aware of the potential health and safety risk of the uneven pathways and has drawn up suitable plans to address this. It has plans also to move the reception classes to ground floor level. Both the junior and senior schools make good use of local sports clubs and playing fields. While there are now sufficient toilets in the senior school, the medical facilities on both sites still do not meet requirements fully. Buildings on both sites are clean, and maintained and decorated regularly. Displays of pupils' high quality art work and other artefacts create an attractive and interesting learning environment that adds to the pupils' feeling of being valued.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a sufficient range of information for parents, carers and others, much of which is on the school's website and in the prospectus. It meets the regulations. Parents receive a detailed report on their children's progress in every subject each year. The reports meet requirements, although the identified 'next steps' to aid improvements are not always focused sharply on the skills to be

demonstrated. Discussion with a few parents showed they are pleased with the school's work and value highly the promotion of their children's self-confidence and personal development.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints policy and procedures are appropriate and meet regulations.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision is effective in meeting the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's progress across all the areas of learning is consistently good and their learning and development are impressive in relation to their starting points, especially in reading and mathematical understanding. The children are happy, having lots of fun and enjoy their time in the school. The planned learning opportunities available help to meet their needs well and keep them actively engaged. However, the two Reception classes are currently sited on the first floor and do not have free access to the outdoor environment, which is an important element of the curriculum.

The personal development and well-being of the children is outstanding. The children settle quickly into routines, initiate their own learning and co-operate well with each other. Their welfare, health and safety are promoted effectively by positive relationships with key members of staff. Through the encouragement of the adults, children develop in self-confidence and self-esteem. While some staff are trained in first aid, they have not yet attended courses in paediatric first aid, although they are already booked to attend the next available course. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The teachers in charge are able to demonstrate through their assessment of children's learning and development that they have raised the children's achievement and made improvements. There are good links with parents and carers who report that their children are very happy and well cared for.

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 curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- provide appropriate careers guidance for secondary age pupils (paragraph 1(2)(g))

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)).

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage are trained in paediatric first aid.

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 pupils' progress even further by:
 - ensuring a consistent whole school approach to identifying 'next steps' for improvement in pupils' work, and sharing the steps with the pupils,
 - defining the features of the 'Hall School Wimbledon good lesson' and ensuring their consistent application by all teachers.
- Provide staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage with additional training opportunities to extend their understanding of the outdoor provision.
- Develop an outdoor area for the exclusive use of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is directly accessible from the classrooms.

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	Hall School Wimbledon
DCSF number	212/6390
Unique reference number	101086
Type of school	Co-educational independent day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	April 1990
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 369 Girls: 165 Total: 534
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 6 Girls: 3 Total: 9
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,650
Address of school	The Senior School: 17 The Downs Wimbledon London SW20 8HF
	The Junior School: Stroud Crescent Putney Vale London SW15 3EQ
Telephone number	0208788 2370
Fax number	0208788 2121
Email address	principal@hsw.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr Timothy Hobbs
Proprietor	Mr Timothy Hobbs
Reporting inspector	Sue Frater HMI
Dates of inspection	16–17 June 2009