

The Hall School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	312/605
Unique reference number	102455
URN for registered childcare and social care	EY381624
Inspection number	341952
Inspection dates	16 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Dr Kanwaljit Singh

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.

Age group: 1–7

Published:

Reference no: 090071

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 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.¹

This was a light touch inspection 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

The Hall School is an independent, co-educational pre-preparatory day school for pupils aged between one and seven years. Pupils come from a range of minority ethnic groups and from White British origin. The school opened in 1958, with new proprietors taking over its running in September 2008. The sudden departure of the previous owner and headteacher resulted in numbers going down to only 14 pupils. Since last year the numbers have increased to 31 pupils, with 11 pupils aged five to seven and all others aged one to five. The school is situated in a quiet residential area in Northwood, in the London borough of Hillingdon. The building the school occupies, The Grange, is a Grade 1 and 2 listed building. It is rented from a company which also uses it in the evenings and at weekends for community meetings and for functions such as weddings.

The school 'strives to create a nurturing, challenging, secure and happy environment in which all pupils are able to explore ideas, develop independence of thought and enhance self-esteem'.

Evaluation of the school

The Hall School provides an outstanding quality of education throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is greatly enjoyed by its pupils. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher provide excellent leadership uniting a very strong team. Pupils enjoy an excellent curriculum and receive an outstanding quality of teaching. As a result, the rate of progress pupils make is exceptionally high. Relationships are strong and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The welfare and health and safety of pupils are good and parents are overwhelmingly supportive. The school is very successful in fulfilling its mission statement in enhancing pupils' self-esteem and provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for child protection meets the requirements. Since the last inspection, the school has met all the regulations regarding health and safety and suitability of the proprietor and has taken steps to bring about other

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

improvements suggested in the previous inspection. The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Quality of education

The overall quality is outstanding. The curriculum is outstanding. In Key Stage 1, pupils follow all the subjects of the National Curriculum. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum is well designed to ensure that all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, irrespective of their level of ability on entering the school, receive appropriately challenging experiences in all the required areas of learning. The curriculum is well balanced and provides a firm foundation for pupils' development. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress and many obtain places at the local selective preparatory schools. Links between subjects are planned with great care and are used to make lessons more exciting. Specialist teaching in dance, ICT, French and art is offered to all pupils from the age of two. The provision of ICT, to be used independently by pupils across subjects, has been improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy swimming during the summer months at a local preparatory school. Personal, social and health education is highly effective and all pupils are encouraged to follow active healthy lifestyles. Pupils have well-developed skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. A wide range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and bring learning to life. Most pupils enjoy regular visits to local parks, shops, museums, art galleries and other places of interest. They benefit from visitors such as fire fighters and police officers.

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding. Teachers plan their lessons effectively, including meeting the needs of pupils who have particular learning difficulties. Well-honed classroom management skills ensure that behaviour is outstanding and that pupils who occasionally lose concentration can quickly be re-engaged in learning. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge; they have high expectations and challenge pupils consistently to work to their full capacity. This raises the pupils' expectations of what they are capable of achieving themselves. The relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. As a result, pupils are very responsive to instructions, confident to ask and answer questions and offer their views. Teaching assistants are efficiently deployed for the benefit of pupils, particularly those who need extra guidance. The small class sizes help teachers in knowing their pupils well.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly; comments and feedback are well matched to the needs of the pupils. Reports to parents inform them well about their children's progress and achievement. Teachers regularly track their pupils' progress through careful assessments. However, the use of this information to plan for future learning is in its infancy and the school has identified this area for further improvement.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The personal development of all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable; pupils enjoy school and are polite and friendly to each other. Positive relationships and well-supported learning experiences enable them to develop self-esteem and self-confidence. As a result, their attitudes to learning are excellent and the attendance rate is high. They have many opportunities to reflect in assemblies, for example when they listened to the story of two donkeys which by cooperating and working together managed to eat their food and saved themselves from starvation. The strong focus on acting responsibly and with respect helps pupils to understand and develop tolerance. Pupils are taught to look to the needs of those who are less fortunate than themselves and this inspires them to raise funds for charities. Pupils are keen to contribute to the school community and Year 2 pupils take on the responsibilities of prefects, head boy and head girl and discharge them with enthusiasm. Through lessons, assemblies and school visits they learn about citizenship, British institutions and other faiths and cultures, which develops their excellent understanding of their own and other communities. For example, in relation to their topic, pupils studied the work of doctors, nurses, fire-fighters and the 'lollipop lady'. Their study of Hinduism gave them a good insight into the lives of their Hindu peers. Pupils from a range of ethnic heritages work and play in a happy and harmonious atmosphere.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school is caring of its pupils and their personal welfare is a high priority. Pupils are well supervised at all times. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe because of the many safety-related learning situations provided by the school. The policy and procedures on safeguarding pupils meet all regulatory requirements. All staff have had child protection awareness training. The school successfully meets all the requirements identified as shortcomings in the last inspection report. All fire extinguishers have been checked recently. There is an appropriate range of policies and procedures in place covering the needs of pupils of all ages. These policies have been reviewed within the last year since the new proprietors took over the management. However, all policies do not have the dates when they are to be reviewed again. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well supported pastorally and excellent attention is paid to their health and safety. The school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 as far it can, because some aspects of the development of access within the building lie with the company that leases this listed Grade 1 and 2 building.

The school makes all the necessary checks with the Criminal Records Bureau before staff are appointed. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved its practice and the recruitment process now includes identity and medical checks.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children enter the school with broadly expected levels of expertise in literacy and calculation. The achievement of all children aged one to five is high in all areas of learning and they attain above average standards by the end of Reception. The warm, welcoming, well-resourced and stimulating environment helps children to develop confidence and feel safe and secure. Teaching is outstanding. There is a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Resources are used efficiently to extend children's independent learning skills. In a lesson for two-year-olds, children were being detectives and were following the given clues. Armed with magnifying mirrors, they followed the 'footsteps' laid by the staff and found the nurse's equipment, doctor's surgery and fire-fighter's outfit. Children indicated their enjoyment of the activity with loud squeals of laughter and also showed the excellent progress they made in their vocabulary by naming the objects such as stethoscope, thermometer, magnifying mirror and fire-fighter's costume. Older children learn to recognise and say letter sounds and use their knowledge effectively when they read and write. The outdoor area is used imaginatively to enrich learning. Staff assessments highlight what children can do and their progress is regularly tracked.

A very strong partnership with parents allows all children to settle quickly, including those from minority ethnic groups. Parents are skilfully involved in their children's learning through regular information about the curriculum. Parents receive first-rate information about their children's progress through meetings with staff and end of year reports.

The children's personal development and behaviour are outstanding. This is because all adults ensure that the welfare and well-being of each individual is well supported. For example, the headteacher has completed training in first aid for children in their early years. Risk assessments are completed carefully when children go out on trips such as visiting the local park. Medicines are given appropriately and a good record is kept of any food or other allergies. Risk assessments on the environment are rigorous to keep the children safe and free of infections. Children happily share equipment, concentrate and work cooperatively due to the thoughtful way that staff have organised the resources. Healthy lifestyles are promoted particularly well due to the use of the outside area and the healthy packed lunches all children enjoy.

The leadership of this stage of education is outstanding. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively, any staff training needs are highlighted and provision is made to improve expertise. The coordinator has a clear understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and has appropriately identified the need to improve teachers' skills in using assessment information for future planning.

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 opportunities for further training, in line with the school's own aims, to improve teachers' use of assessment to inform their planning.
- ensure that all new policies include a date for their next review.

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 good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?	✓			
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?	✓			
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?	✓			
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?	✓			

School details

Name of school	The Hall School		
DCSF number	312/6054		
Unique reference number	102455		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY381624		
Type of school	Co-educational pre-preparatory day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1958		
Age range of pupils	1–7 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 11	Girls: 3	Total: 14
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 8	Girls: 9	Total: 17
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 6	Girls: 9	Total: 15
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Fees (day pupils)	£2,550 per term		
Fees (childcare)	£969 per month		
Address of school	The Hall School The Grange Rickmansworth Road Northwood Middlesex HA6 2RB		
Telephone number	01923 822 807		
Email address			
Headteacher	Mrs Suzanne Goodwin		
Proprietor	Mrs Suzanne Goodwin and Lady Laura Goodwin-Freeman		
Reporting inspector	Dr Kanwaljit Singh		
Dates of inspection	16 October 2009		