

The Lyceum School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	204/6401
Unique reference number	131343
Inspection number	143967
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Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI

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: 3–11

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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 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 Lyceum is an independent, non-selective preparatory primary school for boys and girls aged between three and 11 years. It is jointly owned and run by the proprietors, who are also the headteachers. There are currently 89 pupils on roll, including 17 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children in the Nursery class receive nursery education funding. After-school clubs are provided for pupils of all ages each day until 5.45pm in the afternoon. The aim of the school is to *'provide children with an educational atmosphere and experiences that stimulate, motivate and encourage them.'* The school opened in 1997 and moved to its current location, very close to Liverpool Street Station, in London, eight years ago. Planning permission has just been granted to convert part of the premises to provide additional indoor play and learning space, primarily for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Ofsted conducted an inspection of the school in March 2007, when the provision was judged as good. All but one of the regulations were met at that time.

Evaluation of the school

One girl wrote on the pre-inspection questionnaire, 'The Lyceum helps everyone to bud into amazing pupils. The teachers are our friends and everyone feels at home here!' It is true that The Lyceum provides a good quality education for its pupils, including the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The headteachers are passionate about pupils of all abilities reaching high standards through a wide range of experiential opportunities in school and in the wider community. This they do very well. As a result of good teaching, a good curriculum and outstanding attention to their welfare, health and safety, pupils attain highly, make good progress in their learning and develop outstanding personal skills. The one regulation not met at the last inspection, which concerned appropriate training for the person designated to oversee child protection, is now met. All other

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

regulations inspected at this time are met, including appropriate arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils.

Quality of education

The curriculum for all key stages is good. Particular strengths in arrangements for personal, social and health education (PSHE) make a significant contribution to pupils' outstanding personal skills. This is because PSHE is not only taught as a discreet subject but is also woven into the termly themes. Throughout the curriculum, there is a strong focus on 'learning by doing' and, therefore, pupils have many opportunities to learn from first-hand experiences. This is complemented by an equally strong focus on pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils often take the role of children in different historical periods, becoming completely immersed in what it is like to live at that time. These experiences are extended further through a range of relevant visits, making very good use of the museums and other facilities within the city. Preparations for performances in front of an audience are used to explore pupils' knowledge and skills around particular themes, such as the Victorians. This links learning and personal development together very effectively for pupils of all ages. In addition, music has a high profile during the school week with a range of opportunities for singing and playing. All pupils learn to play the recorder and the vast majority learn to play orchestral instruments.

A strong thematic approach to the curriculum is underpinned by a set of skills, sometimes generic and sometimes subject specific, that all pupils are expected to develop during the course of the theme. Although the delivery of these skills is planned, some skills such as those for information and communication technology, and design and technology are not sufficiently represented. Similarly, not all long- and medium-term plans identify a sufficient range of activities for pupils' differing levels of ability.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good, including that in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Assessment is the weaker element because the tracking, analysis and use of information are not sharp enough to influence teachers' lesson planning. As a result, activities are not always sufficiently well matched to the wide range of pupils' ability in each class and teachers are not always specific enough in their focus on what is to be achieved in each session. This means that opportunities for pupils to extend their thinking, to be clear about what they are learning and to know how to improve their work are sometimes lost. Similarly, teachers assess pupils' work regularly and there are some good examples of written feedback identifying what pupils need to do to improve, but this is not of consistently high quality. Pupils' work across a range of subjects is assessed each term but their attainments over a longer period of time are not yet tracked in sufficient detail to identify how much progress pupils have made from their starting points. Targets for pupils' future levels of attainment are too general. However, assessment procedures and practices have improved since the last inspection and the school is looking at ways to make further improvement in the tracking of pupils' progress over their time at the school. Nevertheless, by the time they leave The Lyceum, pupils achieve high standards and

made good progress from their starting points. They develop particularly good speaking and listening skills and many gain academic and music scholarships to the secondary schools of their choice.

There are significant strengths in teaching and the quality of teaching is monitored, but not sufficiently sharply to identify key aspects that will drive improvement further. Teachers and classroom assistants are true to the school's philosophy, providing good role models in the practical application and exploration of skills. Learning takes place in lively and interesting ways with good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills through paired and group activities, allowing them to interact with and learn from each other. In an outstanding lesson, the teacher created a sense of adventure by getting pupils to find items in the class all with a price tag, and rounding the price to the nearest 10. There was a high level of enjoyment evident, and pupils were able to make good links with their learning in the classroom and how they would apply it in the outside world. In another lesson, pupils developed good note-taking skills as a result of the clear exposition and good modelling of the technique by the teacher. In all classes, staff create an environment in which pupils feel free to express their opinions and deliver extended responses, as well as demonstrate good listening and speaking skills.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils develop outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness throughout their time at the school. Outstanding behaviour, highly developed social skills and a broad understanding of other cultures and views are but a few of the personal qualities shown by pupils at The Lyceum. They are very proud and supportive of their school as shown in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires. Parents and carers report that their children develop into confident, happy young people who are well prepared for the challenges of secondary schooling, not only academically but in their attitudes to work and their relationships with others. Pupils of all ages enjoy their learning very much and this is reflected in their good attendance. They benefit from the many cultural, creative and community opportunities and experiences offered to them. This contributes to their spiritual development and their understanding of the needs, differences and difficulties of those less fortunate than themselves in their local community and in the wider world.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

This aspect of the school's work is outstanding because school leaders and staff have a very good understanding of what safeguarding and safety means for their pupils and for their particular school. They then hold firm to these priorities and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their policies and practices, updating them accordingly. A range of thorough risk assessments, together with staffs' vigilance and commitment, ensure that possible issues such as the potential hazards of the building, regular trips, the daily use of local facilities, and access onto a busy street are identified and minimised. The curriculum provides pupils with good opportunities to develop awareness and ownership of their own personal safety, such as crossing

busy roads and respecting clear boundaries as to what they can and cannot do when off-site. Staff actively encourage pupils to consider why a particular procedure is necessary for their safety.

Although promoted well through the PSHE curriculum, opportunities to help pupils develop some aspects of healthy lifestyles are limited by a lack of outside play and sports areas, and a small dining area with no natural light where packed lunches brought in from home are pupils' only option at mid-day. Nevertheless, the school provides parents and pupils with information about what constitutes a healthy lunch. Good use of local facilities supports outdoor physical activities and the school is always looking for ways to overcome the lack of on-site outdoor play space. For example, arrangements for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to access local facilities for outside play work well to support a range of outdoor learning experiences and older pupils use local play areas for physical activities. Nevertheless, these arrangements are limited during times of poor weather.

The school fulfils its statutory responsibilities in relation to safeguarding pupils. A suitable single central record of checks made on staff is in place and staff have had the required training for child protection. The school has an accessibility policy and a three-year plan to make suitable changes to the curriculum and the building as required by the Disability and Discrimination Act.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

All aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because of better evaluations of strengths and weaknesses, leading to improved action plans and additional staff training. The coordinator, together with the headteacher, is methodically and enthusiastically driving forward the quality of the provision.

The teachers and classroom assistants work very well together not only because they are very committed but because they have a clear understanding and respect for one another's roles and responsibilities. This applies equally to their management roles within the team and their responsibilities for particular activities with the children. As a result, there is a clear focus on pupils' learning and well-being during lessons and good opportunities to assess and record what pupils can do in a variety of situations. These assessments are not yet collated sufficiently to show how well the children progress over time. Similarly, although lesson planning reflects children's interests and skills, the focus for particular individuals is not identified sufficiently.

Parents say that their children settle quickly. Having been in school for only a week, new children have already settled to the routines and activities. They are confidently exploring the possibilities offered to them and getting on well with one another. Most children have well-developed skills on entry to the school and exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. This gives the children a good start to their education and represents good progress from their individual starting points.

Many children attend the after-school provision and the activities provide well for their personal development. Opportunities to use this to enhance children's skills are missed because it is not linked specifically to other areas of their learning.

Although on a separate floor of the building, the Early Years Foundation Stage is very much part of the whole-school provision. Significant policies and practices are shared, such as those for assessment and welfare, health and safety. This continuity is enhanced by good arrangements when the children transfer to Key Stage 1. Pupils in their second week in Year 1 have already settled well.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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:

- improve lesson plans so that a sharper focus on providing appropriate work for pupils of different levels of ability ensures better opportunities to assess pupils' progress against the lesson objectives
- focus formal lesson observations more specifically on the degree of progress that pupils make
- improve the tracking of pupils' attainments at all key stages so that there is a clear understanding and measurement of the amount of progress that pupils make over time.

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 Lyceum		
DCSF number	204/6401		
Unique reference number	131343		
Type of school	Primary preparatory day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1 September 1997		
Age range of pupils	3-11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 43	Girls: 43	Total: 86
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 2	Total: 3
Annual fees	£10,500		
Address of school	6 Paul Street London EC2A 4JH		
Telephone number	0207 2471588		
Fax number	0207 6550951		
Email address	lyceumschool@aol.com		
Headteachers	Mr Jeremy Rowe and Mrs Lynn Hannay		
Proprietors	Mr Jeremy Rowe and Mrs Lynn Hannay		
Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI		
Dates of inspection	23 September 2009		