

Hendon Preparatory School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	302/6002
Unique reference number	101368
URN for registered childcare	337318
Inspection number	344341
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Glickman

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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 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005,² 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

Hendon Preparatory School is a mixed-ability co-educational independent school in Hendon, north-west London which prepares pupils for admission examinations to selective senior independent schools. Pupils are aged 2½ to 13, although girls leave at age 11. There are currently 149 pupils on the roll, of whom 10 are part-time. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs.

There are 25 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, of whom five are aged three years or under. All children aged three and four years are eligible for free places under the Nursery Scheme. The nursery and registered childcare provision was last inspected in February 2007. The provision for children under three is included within the Early Years Foundation Stage and is led and managed by the school. It was inspected as part of this inspection.

The school is popular with the consular and overseas business communities and has a very high proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Founded in 1873, the school is now part of the Cognita Group. The school aims to provide 'a nurturing yet productive environment' in which all pupils can 'achieve their full academic, artistic and sporting potential.' This is its first inspection by Ofsted; it was previously inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education and has some outstanding features. Drawing pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, abilities and languages, the school is highly successful in moulding them into a single community and in preparing them for entrance to the selective school of their choice, often with scholarship places. Teaching of English as an additional language is firmly embedded across the curriculum and pupils benefit from small class sizes which allow those who have special educational needs to receive the support they require. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is good.

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

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and for promoting their welfare, health and safety are good and no referrals have been made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The school meets all the regulations for the registration of independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of education and of the curriculum is good. There is a detailed curriculum plan in place, which includes French and Latin, the former being taught throughout the school. The curriculum is shaped by a focus on the entrance requirements of the selective senior independent schools. It is broadly based and includes music and information and communication technology (ICT), with touch typing being taught from an early stage. Art is a particular strength, with impressive displays of work from even the youngest pupils. The curriculum provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and those children make good progress.

Teaching and assessment are good for pupils of school age and for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and succeed in communicating this to their pupils. Lessons are well planned and teachers have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil; this allows them to provide the appropriate level of challenge or support to ensure that pupils make good progress. The small size of classes allows a high degree of individualised teaching but, on occasion, this approach leaves pupils who have completed the set work without a clear extension task.

Staff and pupils are focused on the school's aim of gaining entrance to selective senior independent schools. Preparation for the entrance examinations is given by staff and accepted by pupils as an explanation of the importance of carrying out each piece of work to a good standard. This leads to an expectation of high standards and a culture which aspires to and values academic success.

Pupils are assessed for verbal and non-verbal skills as well as their level of English on entry and have regular assessments thereafter. The school has recently introduced a sophisticated assessment and tracking system which charts pupils' progress throughout their school career. This informs lesson planning and is used to identify those pupils who require extra support as well as to monitor the quality of teaching and provide the basis for termly reports to parents.

Support for English as an additional language and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to provide both English language and special educational needs support. Because of the very high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, English language development is embedded in all teaching from the Early Years Foundation Stage upwards. Subject teachers are aware of which pupils require additional language support and seamlessly provide it in their lessons using a range

of techniques. In addition, some subject specialists also give supplementary English lessons, further raising both their own awareness of the issue and the profile of English as an additional language within the school. The result of this is that pupils who enter the school with little or no English rapidly acquire a high level of fluency.

The small class sizes allow pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to receive individual attention and the school is justly proud of its success in gaining them places in selective senior independent schools. The school also supports pupils who may not have been identified in a larger school as having special educational needs, allowing them to thrive and achieve their maximum potential.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. The school community is culturally and linguistically diverse, with a range of religious beliefs, and respect for others is an underpinning ethos. Pupils are friendly and polite and quick to assist one another. They enjoy and are proud of their school and speak enthusiastically about it. Attendance is good, although the overseas connections of many families can occasionally lead to prolonged absences.

Behaviour is good. Although a number of parents and pupils raised concerns about poor behaviour being allowed to disrupt learning, this is not evident. The school has recently introduced a comprehensive behaviour policy developed in conjunction with the pupils themselves which, as well as sanctions, offers rewards for positive behaviour and staff are now working to implement it across all year groups.

An elected school council allows pupils of all ages to participate in the running of the school and to gain experience of the democratic process. The citizenship programme for the upper school includes visits to Parliament and the British Library and a visit to the school by the local Member of Parliament. Younger pupils participate in educational activities with the neighbourhood Police Community Support Officer.

The school positively celebrates the diversity of its pupils, often with the involvement of parents. Black History month is an annual event, as is Chinese New Year and a multicultural food festival as well as an international week based around a different subject area each year. A wall display of Islamic art produced by pupils is featured in one corridor.

Pupils take part in community events. They engage in fundraising for a number of charities supported by the Parents' Association. The school choir entertains the occupants of the local day centre and participated in a joint performance with other London schools.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are encouraged to work together and are polite and helpful. Their diverse backgrounds are recognised and celebrated and they learn from their teachers to develop a positive attitude to other cultures.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is good. The school has a suitable child protection policy and, in addition to the headteacher, has three trained child protection officers. All other staff members have received appropriate child protection training. Pupils generally feel safe in school, although some have concerns and feel that they are not treated fairly. Pupils who have disabilities are well supported.

The school has comprehensive health and safety policies which are regularly reviewed. Fire drills are carried out regularly and the premises have recently been checked by the fire officer. There is a well-equipped first aid room and five of the Early Years Foundation Stage staff have paediatric first aid training.

Pupils have a good understanding of the requirements of a healthy lifestyle. School meals are freshly prepared on the premises and offer healthy eating options, although a number of parents and pupils felt that these could be improved. Drinking water is provided and pupils are encouraged to bring their own bottles of water.

Although the school does not have sports facilities on the premises, pupils have regular sessions at a nearby leisure centre and swimming pool.

The school travel plan encourages walking to school and a gazebo has been provided in the playground as a shelter for pupils who arrive early. The pupils themselves recognise the importance of road safety and voiced their concerns about the dangers of traffic outside the school, suggesting a number of possible solutions.

The school has an accessibility plan which complies with the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All necessary checks on the proprietors and staff have been carried out and are recorded in the single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is housed in a former hotel, but has made good use of the accommodation available. Corridors are narrow and there are frequent changes of level, which preclude disabled access to much of the building. Senior classrooms are small, but there is adequate room for the number of pupils; junior classrooms are more spacious and brighter. The ICT suite and science laboratory are large and well equipped. The school is currently installing interactive whiteboards in most of the teaching areas.

The standard of decoration is satisfactory and wall displays are used to good effect. A striking feature is the high quality of the pupils' artwork which is displayed throughout the building.

The playground at the back of the building has a soft surface and includes a large gazebo, educational posters and a colourful mural painted by pupils. Although the playground is relatively small with no room for expansion, staggered break times ensure that it does not become overcrowded. The Early Years Foundation Stage has a raised decking area for outdoor activities and a dedicated play area with appropriate equipment.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Clear information is provided to parents both through the school handbook and regular newsletters and via the school's website.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a satisfactory procedure for handling complaints.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Provision for children under three years of age meets the requirements of the Early Years Register. Children, including those aged three and under, enter the Nursery with skills slightly below those expected for their age in communication, language and literacy. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, they make good progress in their learning and achieve good outcomes. Their greatest achievement is in their personal, social and emotional development.

Children are friendly and work collaboratively as a team. They are polite and helpful, with positive relationships. Many of them demonstrate independence in their self-chosen activities and persist at tasks. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities and these are well enjoyed by children. The outdoor play promotes their physical health. They have access to water and enjoy the midday meals prepared on the premises from fresh ingredients.

The quality of provision for all children, including those aged three and under, is good. Adults work closely as a team and attend to their own professional development. They are also sensitive to the children's needs and support their personal development well, irrespective of their gender, race, cultural background, bilingualism or special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff take observations when children are involved in play and use this information to plan activities which stimulate and interest the learners. However, the assessment information is not well analysed to identify the children's starting points when they enter the Nursery.

Leadership and management are good. The welfare of children is safeguarded effectively because staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Children benefit from the key worker system, which helps them settle well. Staff work well with parents, providing a smooth transfer of their children to the life of the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that extension work is available for pupils who have completed set work within the lesson
- analyse assessment information to identify the children's starting points when they enter Nursery.

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	Hendon Preparatory School		
DCSF number	3026002		
Unique reference number	101368		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	337318		
Type of school	Preparatory		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1873		
Age range of pupils	2–13 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 103	Girls: 36	Total: 139
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 4	Girls: 6	Total: 10
Number of pupils aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 2	Girls: 3	Total: 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,055-£10,455		
Annual fees (childcare)	£7,980		
Address of school	20 Tenterden Grove Hendon London NW4 1TD		
Telephone number	020 8203 7727		
Fax number	020 8203 3465		
Email address	info@hendonprep.co.uk		
Headteacher	Ms Jane Anderson		
Proprietor	Cognita Group		
Reporting inspector	Michael Glickman		
Dates of inspection	25–26 January 2010		