

North Bridge House School – Nursery Department

Independent school inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Elisabeth Linley HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², 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.

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

North Bridge House School's Nursery Department is an independent day school registered for boys and girls aged from three to six years; children can join the school during the term in which they are three. The school was opened in 1938 and is based in a very large detached house which has been adapted to meet the needs of the children and pupils who attend. The nursery department's partner junior and senior schools are located near by. Currently, there are 213 children and pupils on roll; of these, 74 children attend part-time; 137 children receive nursery funding and 46 pupils are in Year 1. The children and pupils who attend represent a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of White European heritage. Approximately a third of those who attend have English as a second language; however, only two children are at the early stages of English language acquisition and no child or pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school aims 'to provide a stimulating, happy and secure environment in which each child is treated as an individual'. The school's last inspection was in June 2007.

Evaluation of the school

North Bridge House School's Nursery Department provides an outstanding quality of education and is highly successful in meeting its aims. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children and pupils in Year 1 make outstanding progress and their personal development and behaviour are outstanding. The school has rigorous procedures in place to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective; provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The nursery department has improved well since its last inspection and now meets all the regulations for independent schools.

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

Quality of education

The outstanding quality of education provided is underpinned by an outstanding curriculum. Most of the children who attend the school are in the Early Years Foundation Stage and so the curriculum for the Playgroup, Nursery and Reception classes is very effectively based on the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. There is an effective balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities within the curriculum and the provision is planned very well to promote children's self-selection of activities and learning experiences. Pupils in Year 1 have access to a curriculum that is based on the National Curriculum. There is a strong focus on English and mathematics and, throughout the school, the promotion of language and communication skills is a strength; the teaching of phonics is a regular feature of the school week. As a result, all children, including those who join with little spoken English, receive very good support in the development and acquisition of their language skills. The curriculum is enhanced throughout the school by specialist provision for music and physical education and in French from Reception. It is clear that children and pupils enjoy these lessons; pupils in Year 1 said that art was a favourite too. This is clear from the very well-presented displays of children's and pupils' high quality art work. Planned opportunities for the enrichment of the curriculum through visits out of school, for example, to Regents Park, and for visitors to school also play an important part in school life. Provision for the development of children's and pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection. The new ICT suite provides opportunities for them to apply their ICT skills, for example, in art. However, the school is correctly planning to further develop ICT throughout school so that it is better used to develop children's and pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum.

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils in Year 1 is enhanced by teaching and assessment that are outstanding. Staff provide very effective support for the children and pupils in their classes on an individual basis. Relationships are excellent; all staff provide excellent role models and forge very good partnerships with parents. The staff aim to make learning fun. For example, in an outstanding lesson in Reception, children were using photographs that had been taken of themselves during 'Africa Week' showing spots painted on their faces. Their previous learning was used very well and they counted the spots, recorded how many they had and then, working in twos, compared what they had counted to see who had more or less. All staff have high expectations of children and pupils to do their best. This was seen in a Year 1 French lesson when most of it was carried out in French and the pupils responded very well. Highly effective questioning is also a feature of lessons; this enables children and pupils to think carefully about their work so that they can apply the skills they already have to new and demanding tasks.

Assessment of children's and pupils' achievements is rigorous and clearly recorded in order to inform the very effective planning of their learning opportunities. The best evaluation of learning clearly shows what children with different abilities have achieved and what needs to be done next to aid their learning. This is a regular

although not completely consistent feature of practice in school. Formal assessments are also carried out so that staff have a clear record of children's and pupils' reading ages and their spelling, writing and mathematical skills. In addition, the annotated assessment portfolios of children's and pupils' work are of a high standard and provide strong evidence, alongside the Early Years Foundation Stage Profiles, of the outstanding progress that children and pupils throughout school make from their different starting points.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Staff have high expectations of children and pupils to behave very well and to be respectful and considerate of others. As a result, their behaviour is outstanding. It is clear that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Year 1 enjoy school very much and this is reflected in their good attendance. Children's and pupils' understanding of different cultures and the promotion of racial harmony is developed effectively through the relationships they develop with each other and through the curriculum. They very much enjoyed Africa Week and the celebrations for Chinese New Year and this was shown through their art work and music. Children and pupils are also encouraged to share their own traditions with each other: children in Reception listened intently as one of the class described the special clothing worn when worshipping at a temple. Children in another Reception class were looking forward to a parent coming into school to talk about the Jewish festival of Purim. Children and pupils help in the school community by being independent, helping each other and tidying up; a child in one nursery class confidently explained to the inspector that he and his friend were helping each other to put on their coats as they were getting ready to go outside. Children learn about the wider community and people who help them, such as the dentist, firemen and police, through visits and visitors to school. Children and pupils are very well prepared for the next steps in their education and future economic well-being. This is aided by the outstanding progress they make in their basic skills; their developing independence and ability to work with others; the strength of their personal development and their growing self-esteem and self-confidence.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school makes outstanding provision for the welfare, health and safety of the children and pupils. Recruitment procedures comply with statutory requirements on safeguarding and robust procedures for child protection are supported very well by effective, well-established policies. As a result, children and pupils are able to learn and play in a secure and safe environment. The school has rigorous fire precautions; risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis. A high proportion of staff members are trained in first aid. The curriculum includes elements which ensure that children and pupils learn of the importance of keeping healthy. They have healthy snacks brought from home and provided by school and they enjoy a healthy school meal at lunchtime. They learn about the importance of taking care of themselves and

of taking regular exercise. They know they must keep safe and work hard to do so, for example, as one pupil said, by giving each other space on the playground to run around and play.

The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the school, either in the playgroup, nursery or Reception classes, they start with a broad range of skills and abilities that are generally in line with what might be expected for their age. They settle quickly into school life, benefiting from the school's nurturing and caring environment and the high quality partnerships that are established with parents. As a result, children's confidence, independence and self-esteem are promoted and developed very well. This development is underpinned by the outstanding provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers make skilful use of questioning to establish children's understanding and they take every opportunity to improve their communication skills. Children learn to read and spell through rigorous teaching of phonics; children with English as an additional language in particular benefit from high quality support. Exciting and very well-planned learning opportunities, combined with highly effective ongoing assessment, underpin the children's outstanding outcomes. As a result, by the end of their Reception year, most children are working well beyond their Early Learning Goals and are very well prepared for the literacy, numeracy and social skills required in Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage benefits from outstanding leadership and management provided by the headteacher and the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator. Through regular monitoring of provision, moderation of assessments and training provided by the coordinator, the staff form a high-quality team and ensure that the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding.

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:

- ensure that staff consistently evaluate children's learning to show what children of different abilities have achieved and where focused challenge or support is required to aid their next steps in learning
- improve the development of children's and pupils' ICT skills and their use of these skills across the curriculum.

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	North Bridge House School – Nursery Department		
DCSF number	202/6195		
Unique reference number (URN)	100071		
Type of school	Nursery		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1938		
Age range of pupils	3–6		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 76	Girls: 63	Total: 139
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 36	Girls: 38	Total: 74
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,390		
Address of school	33 Fitzjohn's Avenue London NW3 5JY		
Telephone number	0207 435 9641		
Fax number	0207 431 7930		
Email address	nursery@northbridgehouse.com		
Headteacher	Robyn Allsopp		
Proprietor	Cognita		
Reporting inspector	Elisabeth Linley HMI		
Dates of inspection	3 March 2010		