

The Harroddian School

Independent school standard inspection report

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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 Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

The Harrodian School is a co-educational independent day school that provides for girls and boys aged between four and 18 years of age. The school was founded in September 1993 and is situated on the south bank of the River Thames in West London on the site that was formerly Harrod's sports club. The number of pupils on role has increased since the school's last inspection in September 2008 to 960. None of the 40 children attending in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in receipt of nursery funded education for three and four year olds. Approximately 15% of pupils receive additional support for numeracy and literacy and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Approximately 10% of pupils speak English as an additional language; however, the vast majority of these pupils attending the school are bilingual and are not in the early stages of learning English.

The school aims to promote high academic standards in an atmosphere of warmth and generosity where other cultures and traditions are valued. The school strives to promote individuality and to encourage international dimensions.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education and meets its stated aims. Since the school's last inspection, much improvement has been made to the teaching of sounds and letters (phonics) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, as a result, children now reach a high standard in their reading. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and the progress that they make throughout school is good. The pupils' good progress reflects the school's good curriculum, an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities and the quality of teaching, which is good overall. The school's provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. The school meets all but one of the regulations for independent schools; the facilities provided for pupils who become ill at school do not fully meet requirements.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Quality of education

The school provides a good curriculum for all its pupils, including those children who attend the Early Years Foundation Stage. In particular, the school's high quality provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well by staff to ensure that pupils' ICT skills are developed well from an early age. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is, in the main, well planned; however, the adult-led and child-initiated experiences are not always evenly balanced. For example, children's purposeful learning out of doors, supported by an effective range of resources, remains underdeveloped and this has had an impact upon the opportunities available for children's physical development. The staff are seeking to develop this aspect of provision in order to move to a free-flow of practical activities, both indoors and out. However, much improvement has been made in the teaching of letters and sounds, which has had a significant impact upon children's high standards in reading.

The school offers a wide range of National Curriculum subjects for its pupils in the pre-prep, prep, senior and sixth-form classes. The breadth of the curriculum encompasses academic subjects, and creative and sporting activities that are very much enjoyed by pupils of all ages. Art is a particular strength and the high standard of pupils' work is clear for all to see in the high quality displays around the school. Pupils are taught by specialist language teachers throughout school. A number of other subjects in Reception through to Year 4 are taught by specialists and this helps to prepare pupils as they move into Prep, when this becomes the norm for all teaching. The pupils' demanding preparation for Common Entrance and scholarships at 13 years of age prepares them well for their later study at GCSE and A level. Similarly, pupils in Year 11 engage in purposeful work-experience opportunities and receive personal careers advice. However, while Year 9 pupils are given advice on subject choices, they are not given sufficient opportunity to explore careers and career pathways to make informed choices. The school has rightly identified this as an area for improvement in its planning.

Pupils of all ages enjoy an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, for example in sports, dance, animated-computer drawing, fashion, engineering, drama, choir, chess, and many more. Pupils also have the opportunity to receive individual tuition in a musical instrument. Further enrichment is provided through events such as the inter-school Classics conference organised with 10 other schools and to visit places such as museums, palaces and gardens. Planned trips abroad are enjoyed by pupils; however, through questionnaires, some senior school pupils and their parents and carers report that they do not have the same opportunities for local curriculum-related visits as pupils in the sixth form, which they would also like to have.

The personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) curriculum is taught discretely as well as being included as part of the broader curriculum. Strategies to implement PSHCE are imaginative and include opportunities for debate, circle time and mediation. The Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI), for example, is particularly successful and enables pupils in Year 9 to become involved with local charities. This

project is taken very seriously and impacts highly upon pupils' confidence as they make media presentations to their classmates on their chosen charity and why it should benefit from the money they have raised. The Learning Support department is also a strength. Data on pupils' attainment and progress are carefully analysed to identify pupils' needs; their individual education plans are of good quality and are updated on a termly basis to ensure that pupils' needs are well met.

Teaching and assessment are good overall, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well in all areas of learning, although their writing, in comparison with outcomes in their reading, is not as well developed. Children in the Reception and pre-prep classes benefit from excellent teaching of sounds and letters. Where teaching is outstanding elsewhere in the school, pupils benefit from teachers' excellent subject knowledge, a very good pace to lessons, and high quality questioning so that pupils' understanding is carefully assessed. Planning is comprehensive and ensures that all pupils' needs, including those with specific learning difficulties or who speak English as an additional language, are met. In some lessons, very good cross-curricular links are made and pupils are encouraged to work in groups or in pairs, while self- and peer-assessment is a fundamental part of learning. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers do not consistently challenge more able pupils from the minute the lesson begins, or their management of behaviour is not sufficiently strong to ensure that all pupils remain on task and make the progress of which they are capable. Nonetheless, pupils confirm that they enjoy most of their lessons. As a result, pupils make good progress overall, while some make outstanding progress, reflecting the teaching they receive. Their success is exemplified at Common Entrance by gaining entry to their choice of schools, their well above average results in their GCSE and A level examinations and gaining a place at a university of their choice.

Assessment has improved since the last inspection. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers and teaching assistants use daily observations to inform their planning. The assessments completed are thorough, regularly carried out and rigorously analysed by the staff in order to keep a careful check on the children's learning and development. Assessment in the pre-prep is similarly rigorous and helps teachers to keep a clear overview of the progress pupils make and where interventions are required. The careful tracking of pupils' progress is developing in the rest of the school and, as a result, leaders and staff are now well placed to determine pupils' future progress against their prior attainment.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have excellent attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic about all elements of their work and play. The vast majority of pupils in the rest of the school have similarly very positive attitudes to their work; behaviour and attendance are good. Pupils are exceptionally positive about the many extra-curricular activities that are offered; participation rates are high. Pupils welcome the many opportunities they have to contribute to school life. They take their roles and

responsibilities very seriously, for example as observed in the buddy reading session when Year 3 pupils helped Reception children with their reading. Other examples include being a school councillor, a prefect in the sixth form or head boy or girl. These positions come with significant responsibilities, such as receiving training as peer mentors to support and work with pupils of all ages in the school. The pupils' charity work and involvement in the community are outstanding; they have a strong sense of moral responsibility and are keen to help others. In Year 12, for example, pupils participate in the Community Volunteer programme when they spend time in primary schools and homes for the elderly. Positive links have been forged with charities such as Kids Company, Barnes Night Shelter and Vera Gray House. Through the comprehensive citizenship programme, pupils learn about national institutions and public services and they develop an understanding and appreciation of major faiths, beliefs and other cultures through school assemblies, the wider curriculum and trips abroad. Many different nationalities are represented in school and the promotion of tolerance and harmony among groups with different cultural traditions is clearly evident. The pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education not only in their academic attainment but in their knowledge of local, national and global issues.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good and welfare requirements for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. The staff have completed training in safeguarding, first aid and fire safety as required. Risk assessments for educational visits, the premises and fire safety are also completed in a timely manner. Pupils are well supervised at school and they confirm they feel safe. The school's work to encourage good behaviour, as reflected in the policies for anti-bullying and the promotion of good behaviour, is successful overall. However, pupils in the senior school report that there is inconsistency in the implementation of the school's detention policy by staff; parents and carers also voiced their concern on this issue through questionnaires. The pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, which is promoted through the curriculum. The school lunches provide a range of healthy options and pupils very much enjoy the sporting and many extra-curricular activities that are available.

The school meets requirements in respect of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All appropriate checks for the proprietor and the appointment of staff, to ensure their suitability to work with children, are carried out and recorded in a single central register as required.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises and outdoor areas provide a suitable and spacious environment for all pupils in which to work and enjoy recreational time. Since the last inspection, the school has provided a new ICT suite which has extended the ICT

facilities available for both teachers and pupils. In addition, the school has a new medical room. However, this room does not fully meet pupils' needs should they become ill at school as toilet facilities are not suitably near as required.

Provision of information

The provision of information for parents and carers meets all requirements. A broad and effective range of information is provided through, for example, newsletters, an informative website and a comprehensive range of handbooks. In this way, parents and carers are kept informed about activities that their children are involved in as well as the work of the school. A high level of parents and carers expressed their satisfaction with the school through questionnaires returned to the inspection team.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the regulations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that appropriate facilities are provided for pupils who are ill in accordance with regulation 5 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (23 (k)).

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 all teaching reflects the best in school so that teachers' expectations for pupils' behaviour are consistently applied and so that all pupils are challenged to achieve at least good progress from the moment a lesson begins
- enhance the provision for careers advice for pupils in Year 9 and above
- enrich the learning opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing regular daily opportunities for children to initiate their own learning both in and out of the classroom

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made.

- provide opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to extend their learning, particularly their physical development, by providing outdoor learning resources that complement the already good provision in the classroom.

Inspection judgements

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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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Day School		
Date school opened	September 1993		
Age range of pupils	4–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 499	Girls: 461	Total: 960
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,370 – 17,250		
Address of school	Lonsdale Road, London, SW13 9QN		
Telephone number	020 8748 6117		
Email address	admin@harrodian.com		
Headteacher	Mr James Hooke		
Proprietor	Sir Alford Houstoun-Boswall		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

3 February 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of The Harrodian School, London SW13 9NQ

Thank you for the welcome that you extended to the inspection team when we visited your school. We enjoyed having the opportunity to visit your lessons and to talk to you. The majority of pupils, parents and carers expressed very positive views about the education you receive. We are pleased to confirm that you are provided with a good quality of education. You benefit from an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities and teaching that is good overall, with much that is outstanding. Where satisfactory teaching remains, you are not always challenged to make good progress from the start of the lesson. Also, in some lessons, teachers do not encourage you to behave as well as you might. You also have to take responsibility for this. However, senior pupils made clear in their discussion with inspectors, and through questionnaires, that they are concerned about inconsistency in the issuing of detentions; some of your parents and carers expressed similar concerns in their questionnaires. Even so, your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. You take your roles within school and your contribution to the wider community very seriously and this is a credit to you all. You are very well prepared for the future, attaining well above average standards in GCSEs and A levels. However, careers advice for pupils in Years 9 and 10 is an area for further improvement which the school has rightly identified.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception classes), children also benefit from good quality provision and they make good progress, particularly in their reading as they receive excellent teaching in their sounds and letters (phonics). However, the children's access to well-resourced activities outdoors is underdeveloped and more is required to ensure a balance between teacher-led activities and ones that the children choose for themselves. The staff have correctly identified these issues for improvement and are well placed to lead the changes that are required.

We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Elisabeth Linley
Her Majesty's Inspector