

Wetherby Preparatory School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	2406403
Unique Reference Number	134822
Inspection number	329576
Inspection dates	6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl 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).

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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, in order 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 inspection (LTI) 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

Wetherby Preparatory School is a selective day school for boys aged eight to 13 years. It is situated in Notting Hill in west London and was opened in September 2004. The school is due to move to larger premises in the Marylebone area in September 2009. It is part of the Alpha Plus Group of schools. The school's motto is 'Participes Civitatis' (being part of a community). The school aims to give opportunities for 'all pupils to shine'. Fifteen pupils have individual education plans to address their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school was last inspected in April 2005.

Evaluation of the school

Wetherby Preparatory School provides a good quality education for its pupils, meets its aims and lives day-to-day by its motto. It has continued to develop successfully since the last inspection, strengthened by the appointment of specialist staff. Pupils make good progress and are well prepared for their next steps in education, which for most, requires success in Common Entrance examinations. Pupils' personal development is good. The school successfully helps pupils to develop into confident young people. There are a few aspects of policy and procedure, to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils that are not yet in place. Parents are rightly very positive about the school.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It is broad and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, as well as French and Latin. The wide range of clubs and visits to places of interest locally and abroad are very effective in enriching pupils' experiences. In Years 6, 7 and 8, the curriculum is particularly focused on preparing pupils to take their Common Entrance and scholarship examinations. Regular physical education forms a strong element of the curriculum. There is an emphasis on ensuring that pupils develop basic skills in English and mathematics and they make good progress in reading, writing, speaking, listening and arithmetic. While the content of pupils' work is good, untidy presentation sometimes detracts from overall achievements.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in developing more rigorous planning and schemes of work which are suitably documented. There is a programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) which, although not as well documented as other parts of the curriculum, provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to discuss issues such as current affairs, nutrition and health. Pupils are encouraged to read widely, including daily newspapers and challenging novels. In an English lesson, Year 8 pupils achieved high standards in a role-play of interviews to explore the personalities of characters in their current class text. There is no provision to give secondary age pupils appropriate information about careers. A small minority of pupils feel that only sometimes does homework help them to understand and improve their work at school.

Teaching and assessment are good though not consistently so throughout the school. Teachers know their pupils well and provide significant amounts of individual support in the small classes. Pupils welcome this support and make good progress. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils who then respond by concentrating and persevering with their tasks. Weekly planning is consistent across the school. Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is good. Where this is used well activities have good pace and there is good challenge for the pupils. There is not a consistently high challenge in all lessons and subjects. A common strength of the best lessons is the opportunities given to pupils to collaborate on tasks so that they can develop their own ideas through discussion.

Pupils' work is regularly marked and there are examples of very informative comments which pupils find helpful. Assessment has improved since the last inspection and there are plans to develop this even more. Many pupils have targets but these are not always specific enough to be understood and measured easily. Older pupils, though, receive some clear and helpful guidance on how to improve their writing. Pupils are regularly assessed and the school is increasingly using standardised tests to help measure achievements. Pupils say they feel well prepared for their next steps in learning. The very positive relationships between teachers and pupils contribute significantly to the outstanding behaviour in lessons. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given good support which follows individual education plans. These pupils make good progress. The school is flexible in its approach to helping pupils, for example, one pupil was able to use a laptop computer in lessons rather than write by hand.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. The moral and social development of pupils is a significant strength of the school. Pupils say they enjoy school, especially the wide range of activities and clubs. There is something for everyone. Attendance is good and behaviour is mostly outstanding. The pupils are very polite to adults and their peers.

Pupils have a number of opportunities to make a contribution to the school community. Many pupils take part in sports teams for matches within school and

between schools. Everyone who wants to play in a team gets a chance to do so. Other ways pupils contribute to the school and wider community include singing in the choir and raising money for charities. The school council provides an effective method for pupils to have their say about their school. Pupils are confident that their views are listened to; for example, the length of some art lessons was increased as a result of pupils' requests.

Pupils develop their cultural awareness through several areas of the curriculum. In geography pupils learn about other cultures of the world and in religious studies they gain knowledge about other faiths. Further understanding comes from visits to institutions such as the National Gallery and the Louvre in Paris. Encouragement to have regard to current affairs also helps the pupils have an understanding of the world around them.

Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being through their good achievements in basic skills, including information and communication technology and in their personal development, in particular, their self-confidence.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Pupils are well supervised at all times. The school is an orderly community and the pupils say that they feel safe. They are not concerned about bullying and, while acknowledging that there are sometimes disagreements, they are confident that any issues are quickly and fairly dealt with. Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lives and have good opportunities for physical exercise. Nutrition forms part of the PSHE programme and attention has been given to providing healthy school meals. The school has satisfactory child protection policies and written procedures. However, while the designated child protection officer has attended the appropriate training other staff have not. The school is aware of this and has planned to have all staff trained early in 2009 to comply with national requirements. Fire risk assessments have been undertaken and practice has improved; the school now complies with recent fire service recommendations. All staff have had fire awareness training. First aid provision is satisfactory. While health and safety policies are appropriate, there is not a comprehensive and current risk assessment for the use of buildings and the activities undertaken. There is an adequate policy and plan that meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided by the school (standard 1) and must:

- provide appropriate careers education guidance for secondary age pupils (paragraph 1(2)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that all staff complete appropriate child protection training to comply with DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- complete health and safety risk assessments for the buildings and school activities (paragraph 3(4))

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, ensure that further checks are made of staff who have lived overseas (paragraph 4(2)(c))
- ensure that the central register of staff shows that appropriate checks have been made of staff who have lived overseas (paragraph 4C (2 and 3)).

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 the presentation of pupils' work.
- Ensure there is a consistently high challenge in all subjects and lessons.

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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School details

Name of school	Wetherby Preparatory School
DCSF number	2406403
Unique reference number	134822
Type of school	Preparatory
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 2004
Age range of pupils	8-13
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	103
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,600
Address of school	19 Pembridge Villas London W11 3EP
Telephone number	0207 2430243
Fax number	0207 3135244
Email address	admin@wetherbyprep.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr N Baker
Proprietor	Alpha Plus Group
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI
Dates of inspection	6 November 2008