

Inspection Report
Heathfield House School
Independent School
DfES ref no: 313/6074

Inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002

Dates of inspection:

10 – 13 October 2005

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Heathfield House School is an independent primary school for boys and girls from four to eleven years. In addition to full time education, it provides early morning, after, evening and holiday childcare. It is located in Turnham Green, in the London Borough of Hounslow, within easy reach of road and Underground services. The school was founded in September 2004 as a primary school by the present proprietors as a result of the expansion of their pre-existing nursery school, Tic-toc Day Nursery. It is housed in a large church hall which is situated in a pleasant residential area and which has been converted for the purpose.

The school aims to 'provide a stimulating well-balanced and varied education, helping each child to develop his or her full potential intellectually, socially and physically. The school's strength lies in its small and dynamic community in which each child's individual needs, strengths and interests are recognised and valued in a secure, supportive and caring environment.' It strives to develop 'children who are confident, curious and enthusiastic learners able to think independently and live co-operatively.'

Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. At the time of the inspection there were 26 pupils on roll, distributed across the Reception Class, Year 1 and Year 2. There were no pupils with special educational needs (SEN) on roll. There were four bilingual pupils and one trilingual pupil, all at advanced stages of learning English as an additional language (EAL). The school has identified five gifted and talented children.

Summary of main findings

This is an outstanding school. It provides excellent quality education and successfully meets its aims. Its broad and balanced curriculum enables pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. The quality of teaching, the quality of assessment of pupils' work and the monitoring of their progress in each area of learning and development are particular strengths of the school.

The school has a warm caring ethos, that fosters excellent relationships and very good personal development. The provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is clearly reflected in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The provision for their spiritual development is good. The health, safety and welfare of the pupils are very well promoted. Parents feel well informed of their children's progress and are highly supportive of the school.

What the school does particularly well:

- It creates a secure, family-like environment in which pupils are very happy to grow and learn. As a result, pupils are confident and articulate, enthusiastic, very friendly and welcoming.
- It provides an outstandingly broad, balanced and innovative curriculum that enables each pupil to achieve to the best of his or her ability:
- Its teaching is good to outstanding and empowers pupils to achieve at least well. Teachers assess pupils' work and monitor their progress very effectively;
- It successfully encourages pupils to take responsibility for their learning and, as a consequence, they have a mature attitude to work;
- It promotes the pupils health and safety in a systematic, thoughtful and caring way;
- The quality of the information it provides to parents and others is outstanding: and
- The early development of its ethos and curriculum have been lead and managed very effectively by the dedicated proprietors

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations

The school meets all the requirements.

Next steps

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

- Continue to maintain these high standards by planning for the next four academic years as well as the current year
- Plan more rigorously the spiritual development of pupils; and
- Forge stronger links with the community

COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum provision for the pupils' academic, physical and personal development is outstanding. The school follows the Foundation Stage guidance for the Reception Class and National Curriculum for Key Stage 1. The curriculum is enriched with French and drama taught to all classes by specialist teachers and with a course of logical thinking taught to Years 1 and 2. The school implements the national numeracy and literacy strategies and provides daily reading opportunities for each pupil. In Key Stage 1, science, history, geography, art and design, design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT) are taught through half termly themes. As the school expands into Key Stage 2, it intends to plan the curriculum on a subject basis and to employ specialist teachers where appropriate. Pupils will take the national tests in English and mathematics for the first time this academic year.

The school has a clear and detailed curriculum policy supported by a comprehensive assessment policy. It achieves its stated aims of promoting high standards in all areas of learning, physical and mental development as well as an awareness of the importance of a

healthy lifestyle. It has adapted suitable commercial schemes of work for National Curriculum subjects. Teachers' long and medium terms plans are good and provide a firm basis for their daily planning. Provision for all areas of learning is very good. The school has thoughtfully planned cross-curricular links, in particular with numeracy, literacy, science and ICT. It is planning links with citizenship and the Every Child Matters agenda.

All pupils make at least good progress in numeracy and literacy, as evidenced by the records kept by the school. At least half the pupils of reception age are likely to exceed the early learning goals in each area of development by the time they move up to Year 1. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is higher than national expectations.

The school has introduced a course of logical thinking in an effort to develop pupils' thinking skills and to encourage teamwork, as well as independent learning skills. Logical thinking is currently taught through mathematics and science and will be extended to other subjects, including religious education, in the course of this year.

Provision for physical education is particularly good and includes a good balance of games, skills and dance, taught twice weekly as indoor or outdoor sports. The school uses several local sports facilities. Pupils' physical development is further enhanced by weekly swimming sessions taught by a specialist instructor in a local leisure centre. There is good outdoor play provision with suitable equipment for the current age range. Large-scale apparatus is to be purchased to meet the physical needs of the older pupils as the school grows.

The curriculum is suitably modified to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Lesson plans indicate how the pupils' needs will be met and the match of work to these needs is good. They are consistently evaluated to inform future planning. There were no pupils with SEN at the time of the inspection. There were four bilingual pupils and one trilingual pupil, all at various advanced stages of learning EAL. Provision for these pupils is very good because their teachers are aware of their needs and extra support is given by learning support assistants as appropriate. They achieve well or very well. The school has identified five gifted and talented pupils across the age range. Their needs are effectively met and their achievements are very high.

Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. It is taught as a weekly discrete lesson and successfully reinforced in and out of all lessons. Elements of citizenship have been included and the school has planned to deliver the full citizenship programme for Key Stage 2 in the next stage of development.

The curriculum is enriched by a well planned calendar of educational visits and events. In addition, the school runs a good range of clubs as part of its extended childcare provision. These clubs are well attended and suitably supervised.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching ranges from good to outstanding. The head is an excellent teacher who leads by example. Teachers are all qualified for the age range they teach and collectively, have expert knowledge of the curriculum. The school uses the staff's personal expertise and interests judiciously in the teaching of art, music and dance. However, it has not developed strong links with the local community where more expertise is available. Classroom assistants provide very effective support.

Lesson planning is consistently good and the work planned closely matches each pupil's ability and needs. Teachers deliver well crafted lessons with clear introductions and

effective conclusions in which they review and evaluate pupils' learning. Each lesson is carefully evaluated to inform future planning. Teachers recognise that pupils are active partners in learning and empower them to take the lead in certain areas. They involve pupils in self or peer assessment in a way that promotes a desire for self-improvement. They provide a good balance between teacher-directed activities and independent learning. They manage their time extremely well and have established clear routines and excellent relationships in and out of their classroom. The school is well resourced, particularly in ICT, and teachers make effective use of these resources to promote learning.

In the lessons where the teaching was outstanding, the teacher provided consistent challenge and communicated her enthusiasm very effectively. As a result, pupils were consistently stretched, shared her passion for learning and achieved very highly. The school has effective procedures in place to share examples of best practice.

The school policy of keeping class sizes small enables teachers to know their pupils very well. Furthermore, very effective procedures for continuous assessment ensure that teachers know exactly where their pupils are at. Teachers set learning and general targets with their pupils and pupils know their targets well. These are reviewed every half term during progress meetings. Teachers give effective verbal feedback to pupils in lesson time and write constructive comments in pupils' books. At regular intervals, they show pupils exactly how to improve. This combination of feedback strategies enables them to boost pupils' confidence while raising standards.

The school uses the Foundation Stage profiles as guidance for summative assessment for the reception pupils and a combination of National Curriculum level descriptors and standardised tests as benchmarks for the older ones. Pupils will take the national tests for the first time in summer 2006.

The performance of the staff is very well managed and linked to a coherent training plan. There is a very good programme in place for the induction of newly qualified teachers. The school is working towards meeting all the requirements of the Investors in People standard by the end of this term. It has devised a useful strategic plan for the overall development of the school in this academic year. It also carries out an annual self-evaluation which helps inform strategic planning for the next academic year.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

The School's provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is clearly reflected in pupils' very good behaviour, excellent working and social relationships and excellent attitude to learning. Pupils are confident, courteous, respectful, very friendly and very mature in their behaviour. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good.

The school enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through planned curriculum opportunities, supportive teaching strategies and effective pastoral care. In PSHE and topic work, for instance, they learn about themselves and how to deal with emotions. They have many opportunities to speak and express their opinions, as well as to take lead roles, which promotes their self-confidence as well as developing their communication and interpersonal skills. The staff promote a 'have a go' attitude through sensitive teaching. Pupils value the reward system which is implemented very effectively.

The introduction of training in logical thinking helps them sharpen their thinking and problem solving skills. Through well-formulated targets, they can monitor their own progress.

The staff are very good role models who create a climate of mutual respect and trust in which all pupils can flourish. They display pupils' work very attractively and often it is used as a resource. They provide stimulating tasks and manage their classes very well. As a result, pupils settle to task easily and quickly. Pupils enjoy coming to school. When asked about what they liked least about their school, one of them expressed the collective sentiment by exclaiming, 'Nothing! We love our school! We like everything about it!'

Moral education is taught through the curriculum, PSHE and pastoral care. The behaviour policy encourages pupils to discuss the implications and effects of their behaviour on others. As a result, they are very polite and show respect for others, the learning environment and the school's property. The weekly assemblies and circle time sessions further enhance appropriate moral choices and provide pupils with spiritual experiences. However, the spiritual development of pupils has not been planned as rigorously as their moral, social and cultural development.

The school gives pupils numerous opportunities to show initiative. Pupils are encouraged to discuss and work out problems with others independently and to try and reach a compromise. They have formed a school council involved in improving the school environment. Pupils feel that the school listens and responds to their views. They have on several occasions thought of people less fortunate than themselves and raised funds for a number of national charities.

Pupils gain knowledge of public institutions and services in Britain mainly through the 'People who help us' theme and through visits to the local fire station and from professionals.

The school's provision for cultural education and preparation for life in a multi-cultural society is very good. For instance, pupils gain an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures through the celebration of festivals, their learning of French, study of the major religions and visits to various places of worship. The school has good resources to equip pupils with an understanding of faiths and cultures other than their own.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school promotes the welfare, health and safety of its pupils very effectively. A good range of useful policies are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils in various circumstances. Pupils and parents report that they appreciate the safe, warm family environment provided by the school. They feel that the school helps pupils settle in well when they join the school. The school has suitable First Aid procedures and all staff have received appropriate training at First Aider level. The school's procedures for child protection are in line with the latest legislation.

The behaviour policy reflects the school's ethos and is implemented consistently in and out of lessons. Pupils are very well-behaved, self disciplined and show a lot of consideration to others. They are closely supervised throughout the day, in and out of school. They respond very well to the reward system in use and no serious sanctions have been recorded.

The school is particularly successful at promoting healthy living, in particular healthy eating. It achieves this through daily discussion, partnership with parents, class and club activities and the PSHE curriculum.

The school holds termly fire drills and weekly fire alarm tests and keeps appropriate records. It meets all fire safety regulations.

The school keeps an admission and attendance register in conformity with the regulations. It takes its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act seriously and has devised a three-year plan showing how it will improve accessibility to the premises for disabled people and how it will make the curriculum accessible to pupils with a disability.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school is owned by two proprietors. One is also the headteacher and a full-time teacher. The other is the school administrator who also fulfils the role of supply teacher whenever needed. Both are qualified and experienced teachers. They have put in place a rigorous recruitment procedure. Prior to the appointment of staff, checks are made to confirm their suitability to work with children, their prior experience, medical fitness, identity and qualifications.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school provides suitable teaching accommodation. It is housed in a large church hall shared with Tic-toc Day Nursery School. A mezzanine floor has been added to provide classrooms for pupils of primary school age. New flooring has been laid recently. The building is maintained in a good state of repair and the premises are kept very clean and tidy. There is a store room, a medical area and a library corner. Pupils eat their packed lunches in comfort in an attractively decorated dining room. There is also a well-equipped kitchen for cooking sessions or where food can be stored.

The playground is a pleasant outdoor play area, adequate in size and providing hard and AstroTurf surfaces. It is well fenced off from the street. There is scope to utilise a strip of land at the back of the building for gardening purposes.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners

The quality of information provided to parents and others is outstanding. The school provides useful information through its prospectus and website. An appropriate range of documents is available to parents on request. Once pupils have enrolled, parents receive a very informative handbook and newsletters. In addition, they are informed daily via a news board displayed at the entrance. They are invited to termly assemblies, open sessions and curriculum meetings. The headteacher makes herself available to meet them at home time at least once a week. The school has an open-door policy and the vast majority of

parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem. Parents are given the opportunity to be partners in the development of the school through one-to-one interviews at the end of the school year.

A report is sent to parents twice a year to inform them of their children's progress. All parents are requested to discuss its contents at a meeting held the following week. The reports provide parents with detailed and clear information about what their children can do and need to do to improve. The overwhelming majority of parents feel well informed about their children's progress.

The school also provides a very good range of information to staff and all staff feel well informed.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

The school has effective procedures in place for handling complaints, including both an informal and formal stage. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, the vast majority of parents said they understood the procedures for making a complaint.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of School:	Heathfield House School
DfES Number:	313/6074
Type of School:	Primary
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys: 11 Girls: 15 Total: 26
Annual fees (day pupils):	£5,700
Address of school:	Turnham Green Church Hall Heathfield Gardens Chiswick London W4 4JU
Telephone:	0208 994 3385
Fax number:	0208 995 0255
Email address:	enquiries@heathfieldhouse.co.uk
Headteacher:	Mrs Caroline Goodsman
Proprietors:	Mrs Caroline Goodsman and Mrs Pauline Williamson
Reporting inspector:	Mrs Michele Messaoudi
Date of inspection:	10 – 13 October 2005.

© crown copyright 2005. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

School inspection reports are available on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The website lists Ofsted independent school inspection reports, together with information on the work Ofsted does in the independent sector.