

Lion House School

Independent School

DCSF Registration Number	212/6391
Unique Reference Number	101087
Inspection number	322031
Inspection dates	21 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Michèle Messaoudi

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 touch inspection (LTI) which focussed 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

Lion House School is a non-selective, pre-preparatory independent school that provides full-time education to children aged four to seven years. It is located in Putney, in the London Borough of Wandsworth. The pre-preparatory classes opened in 1992 as an expansion of the nursery school that was founded in 1985. There are currently 43 pupils on roll, two of whom have English as an additional language and two have a statement of special educational need. The school aims to *'help all children reach their full potential whatever their ability, and to provide a curriculum that suits their needs, interests and expectations; to encourage curiosity and creativity and enjoyment of learning in all children.'* It was last inspected in 2004 and this is its second published inspection report.

Evaluation of the school

Lion House School provides an outstanding quality of education and meets its aims. It is led very effectively by the principal and a cohesive team of staff who are dedicated to nurturing the potential of each pupil. The school has made good improvement since its last inspection and the accuracy of its self-evaluation reflects its capacity to make further improvement. It has implemented all the recommendations of the last inspection report and now makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. It has improved the quality of marking and built on its many strengths. It now complies with all the regulations for independent schools. Pupils' parents rightly express a high level of satisfaction with the school.

Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding. It is broad and balanced and is directly relevant to pupils' individual needs, enabling them to make outstanding progress over a short time in their academic, physical and personal development. In the Reception class, the planning follows the Foundation Stage guidelines and it is informed by daily assessments of what each pupil can and cannot do in the six areas of learning. In the pre-preparatory classes, the schemes of work are reviewed annually to challenge each pupil to the maximum of his or her potential and to stimulate their interest. The needs of pupils who have learning or behavioural difficulties and those of pupils who

have English as an additional language are met through individualised planning. These pupils have work well matched to their needs, which are effectively identified and well understood. Pupils who have a statement of educational need have all the requirements of their statements met by the school. The curriculum has many strengths. Owing to the flexibility afforded by its small size, the school can accelerate the learning of the more able pupils and give extra support to those who need it. There is a wide range of specialist teaching in science, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE), drama, music and cooking. Provision for basic skills is outstanding and standards in mathematics, reading, creative writing and ICT are exceptionally high. The school has rightly identified the improvement of handwriting as an area for development. Provision for science is good and the school has put in place a detailed plan to improve this subject further.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good with outstanding features. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and they share very good knowledge of their pupils' prior attainments, needs and aptitudes. They plan tasks that match pupils' needs closely and use the information from assessments to plan the next tasks accordingly. Teachers employ a wide range of methodologies and resources to stimulate interest, promote creativity and encourage pupils to think and learn independently. Pupils experience the curriculum through practical activities in all areas of learning. Where the teaching is outstanding, it engenders an infectious enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning among the pupils and provides consistent challenge whilst maintaining a high level of creativity. This teaching is very skilful at respecting each pupil's individuality, nurturing his or her abilities and unlocking potential. In lessons where pupils are taught by two teachers, the excellent teaching is enhanced by very close team work. However, occasionally, too many activities are presented to the youngest pupils, resulting in learning that lacks focus and slows down their rate of progress. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed to support learning. The school has a wide range of assessments to test pupils' learning and evaluate their achievements. Assessment records are focused, detailed and clearly indicate the amount of progress made by each pupil. In the pre-preparatory classes, pupils are shown exactly how to improve through constructive verbal feedback, developmental marking and the setting of challenging targets.

As a direct consequence of the outstanding curriculum and good teaching they experience, most pupils make outstanding progress and a small minority make good progress over the time spent at the school. An indication of this is pupils' very high achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT by the end of Year 2, well above what is expected for their age. Most pupils succeed in moving on to a junior school of their parents' choice.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils like their school, as reflected in their excellent attendance and their lively contributions in class. When asked what they would change to improve the school, they reply, 'nothing.' The staff create an environment in which pupils feel physically and emotionally safe. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in and out of lessons and instances of bullying are very rare. Pupils are well-mannered and considerate. They feel very well cared for and develop very positive relationships. They have many opportunities to share their views and they listen to each other respectfully. As staff establish excellent relationships based on mutual respect, pupils feel valued and develop a high level of self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline. Through the programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils explore their strengths and weaknesses and develop self-awareness. The encouragement of creativity enhances their capacity for reflection and problem-solving. They feel at ease to learn from their mistakes. They work very well independently and collaboratively. These features and the excellent basic skills they acquire prepare them very well for the next stage of their education and their future economic well-being.

Through the PSHE and religious education programmes, pupils develop an awareness of diversity and British institutions. Pre-preparatory pupils all experience shouldering responsibilities as monitors, which develops their sense of initiative and responsibility. The varied programme of extra-curricular activities, off-site visits and visiting speakers to the school enriches pupils' cultural awareness and enhances their creative, thinking and physical skills.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school implements effectively a wide range of essential policies to minimise the health and safety risks to pupils, and this aspect of the provision is good. The arrangements for safeguarding children are robust and the child protection and recruitment procedures comply with the latest guidance. The proprietor has compiled a single central register that enables her to monitor that all the required checks are carried out on adults who have regular contact with the pupils prior to confirmation of their employment or voluntary service.

Pupils gain a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and safety issues through the curriculum and the vigilant supervision exercised by staff. The school provides well balanced meals for the pre-preparatory classes and encourages parents to pack nutritious lunches for the younger pupils. Most pupils walk, cycle or scoot to school, and the PE curriculum provides a wide range of physical activities.

The school fulfils its obligations under 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.

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:

- carry through the plan to develop the provision for science to the same very high standard as reading, creative writing and mathematics
- as identified by the school, raise the standard of handwriting across the age range.

School details

Name of school	Lion House School		
DCSF number	212/6391		
Unique reference number	101087		
Type of school	Day pre-preparatory school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1992		
Age range of pupils	4-7 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 36	Girls: 7	Total: 43
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Annual fees	£9,630		
Address of school	The Old Methodist Hall Gwendolen Avenue London SW15 6EH		
Telephone number	020 8780 9446		
Fax number	020 8789 3331		
Email address	office@lionhouseschool.co.uk		
Principal	Miss Jane Luard		
Proprietor	Miss Jane Luard		
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi		
Dates of inspection	21 April 2008		