

# The Shrubbery School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	330/6064
Unique Reference Number	103578
Inspection number	329426
Inspection dates	8 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby 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 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

The Shrubbery is a non-denominational independent day school for boys and girls aged three to eleven years. It is privately owned and is located in Sutton Coldfield on the outskirts of Birmingham. Although the school is not selective, prospective pupils visit the school for half a day for informal assessments in order that a formal offer of a place can be considered.

The school's mission statement is, *'We are committed to providing a happy and caring environment in which all children are encouraged to reach their full potential'*.

The school is registered for 280 pupils and there are currently 240 full-time pupils and nine part-time pupils on roll. The school does not participate in the government funding scheme for nursery education. The school opened in 1930 and was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2004. The early years provision, which is part of the school, is registered separately and was inspected in February 2005.

## Evaluation of the school

The Shrubbery provides a good quality education for pupils, both in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and throughout the school. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere where pupils and adults enjoy excellent working relationships. The school has responded well to the outcomes of its last inspection and has addressed the weaknesses identified successfully. However, attention to some basic health and safety requirements has not been sufficiently robust. As a result, two of the current regulations are not met.

## Quality of education

The curriculum throughout the school is good. Pupils benefit from a wide range of additional activities which enable individuals to achieve high standards in such aspects as sport, music, languages, speech and drama. Participation in sporting competitions and good links with a local secondary school provide good opportunities

for physical education. These activities complement the good provision for sport within the curriculum.

Planning is thorough and includes good links between different areas of the curriculum. For example, art work in a Year 4 class is planned to support a history topic which will be followed up later in the term with a theme day when pupils will dress up in Viking costumes. This is a good illustration of how the school effectively engages pupils with their learning. Lessons are interesting and include a good range of activities such as mathematical investigations, which help to develop pupils' problem-solving skills. Visits are sensibly planned to complement work in school and pupils talk enthusiastically about visits they have been on. Visitors into school, such as the local MP to talk about citizenship, further enhance the curriculum which the school provides.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good throughout the school. The school's detailed assessment systems indicate that pupils make good progress during their time at The Shrubbery. Work seen in lessons and pupils' books confirms this. However, the quality of teaching is not consistent. It ranges from outstanding to satisfactory with most of the very best teaching and learning being in the EYFS. This enables children to get a very good start to their education. Most lessons, throughout the school, move on at a brisk pace and teachers have high expectations of behaviour and about the amount of work to be covered. Pupils respond well to this and their excellent attitudes and obvious pride are reflected in the purposeful atmosphere and very well presented work throughout the school. In many lessons, probing questions are used effectively to check understanding and extend learning. However, on occasions, pupils are given work which is not sufficiently challenging to enable them to make as much progress as they could. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.

The small classes enable teachers to know their pupils very well. Consequently, pupils receive a lot of support with their learning. Occasionally teachers provide too much direction and guidance. As a result, pupils do not have to think enough for themselves and the progress they make in their learning slows. Teachers' marking frequently provides helpful comments to inform pupils about how to improve their work. As a result, these pupils have a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve and they make good progress. Brief plenary sessions during lessons are used effectively to check pupils' understanding and extend learning through sharing of ideas.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. They clearly enjoy school a great deal and attendance rates are high. Pupils who have moved from other schools speak highly of the welcome they have received and praise the outstanding behaviour and calm atmosphere at The Shrubbery. Pupils throughout the school have exemplary attitudes in lessons and are very polite to adults and each other. There is excellent racial harmony in the school and pupils talk with feeling

about each others' cultures. The school councils provide a good opportunity for pupils to influence the life of the school and they are rightly proud of some of their initiatives. For example, they talk enthusiastically about their playground rules and the buddy system which they suggested. The pupils develop good levels of basic skills as well as a high level of self-confidence, which prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

Pupils have a good understanding of both the local and world communities through their charity work as well as the entertainment they provide through their singing, speech and drama activities. They are very reflective in assemblies and clearly understand the challenges faced by people less fortunate than themselves. For example, older pupils were clearly moved by the success of their recent fundraising to help rebuild a primary school in Malawi.

## Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Although the school believes it is better than this, it is not because too many procedures are not rigorous enough. For example, the school's policy for safeguarding pupils on educational visits does not provide sufficiently clear guidance for staff. A consequence of this is that the risk assessments for these activities are not detailed enough to ensure that all risks have been adequately considered. Although the school does have a reasonable regard to its general health and safety duties, a few aspects of routine maintenance have not been attended to. These include missing protective covers on some fluorescent lights and steps which are a tripping hazard because they are not clearly marked. The school's first-aid policy is suitable and most arrangements are in place. Although the school has a considerable number of members of staff who have received first-aid training, the school's only qualified first-aider is not on site full time and there is not a full-time member of staff qualified in paediatric first aid in the EYFS.

Pupils of all ages have a very good understanding about how to stay safe. They are frequently reminded about health and safety issues during lessons and behave very sensibly. They have a very good understanding about 'stranger danger' because they are involved in initiatives within school. For example, the 'Oozat' system is very familiar to pupils and they can explain clearly what to do if they see a stranger on the school site. The school council's plan to introduce 'Bee Safe' symbols around school, to indicate areas of potential danger, is another sensible initiative. Pupils have a good understanding about how to lead healthy lifestyles.

Safeguarding procedures are robust. The school has implemented an appropriate recruitment policy to ensure that staff have undergone the necessary checks before commencing work at the school. The school's staff records meet requirements.

The school has prepared and implemented an accessibility plan and fully meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good. Relationships between adults and children are excellent and these are the main reasons why children in all classes settle happily and feel safe and secure in their surroundings. As a result, they learn and develop well and enjoy their time in school a great deal. Classroom displays are bright and stimulating and staff plan exciting lessons where there is a good balance of teacher led and child initiated activities, enabling children to make good progress in all areas of learning.

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. All staff have high expectations of children and their behaviour is excellent. There is a strong emphasis on children doing things for themselves so that they grow in independence and thrive in an environment where they are highly valued. Children also work well alongside one another. The quality of the welfare, health and safety of children is satisfactory. While the setting is well equipped, and children are cared for well, staff are aware that they are not yet meeting the legal requirement to have a member of staff qualified in paediatric first aid present at all times. Leadership and management are good. Staff are skilled at observing how well children are doing and quickly move them on to more challenging activities to ensure their individual needs are met. Parents take a keen interest in their children's learning and contribute well to homework tasks. By the end of their time in the EYFS most children exceed the standards typical for children of this age. They do particularly well in their personal development.

## 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 provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DCSF guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (reference HSPV2) (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- ensure that when pupils are present there is always a qualified first-aider on the school premises (paragraph 3(6)).

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the school must:

- ensure that at all times when there are children present there is at least one person on the premises who has a current paediatric first-aid certificate.

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development.

- Ensure that all teaching is of consistently high quality so that all pupils are suitably challenged to reach their potential.

## 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 effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		✓		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		✓		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	✓			
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?			✓	
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		✓		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		✓		

## School details

Name of school	The Shrubbery School		
DCSF number	330/6064		
Unique reference number	103578		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1930		
Age range of pupils	3–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 125	Girls: 115	Total: 240
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 3	Total: 9
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3735–£5820		
Address of school	5 Walmley Ash Road Sutton Coldfield West Midlands B76 1HY		
Telephone number	01213511582		
Fax number	01213511124		
Email address	info@shrubbery.bham.sch.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Cook		
Proprietor	Mr Eric Allen and Mr Paul Terry		
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI		
Dates of inspection	8 October 2008		