

North Bridge House School – Nursery Department

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	202/6195
Unique Reference Number	100071
Inspection number	302817
Inspection dates	12-13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton

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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This inspection of the funded nursery education was carried out under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and framework Act 1998.

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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 Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

North Bridge House School Nursery department is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between two years eight months to six years. The school has partner junior and senior departments on other sites locally. The school was opened in 1938. There are currently 178 children on roll, of whom 54 are of school age. The school is held in a very large detached house, which have been adapted for school use. This is the first section inspection of the school under s162A of the Education Act 2005.

The school aims 'to provide a stimulating, happy and secure environment in which each child is treated as an individual'.

Evaluation of the school

The school succeeds in its aims. The children thrive in the nurturing environment, are happy at school and are highly valued as individuals. The quality of the education is good. As a result of good teaching using the Foundation Stage curriculum children make good progress. They enjoy their learning and their behaviour is outstanding. The school is very vigilant in ensuring the welfare, health and safety of children. Much of this success is due to the committed and experienced head teacher who continually strives to improve the school. The school completed the self-evaluation comprehensively and identified areas for improvement. The school meets all but one of the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good and meets the needs of the children. The Foundation Stage curriculum is effectively implemented throughout the Nursery department with the older children working towards National Curriculum Key Stage 1 by the time they reach the end of the Reception year. The majority of children achieve the early learning goals during their Reception year with some reaching them at an earlier stage. In addition, specialists teach French, music, physical education and dance. Personal, social and health education is integrated throughout the curriculum with 'circle time' within each class.

A wide range of visits and visitors further extends the curriculum with recent visits to the National Gallery, the Wallace Collection and the Science Museum. After seeing Van Gogh's Sunflowers painting during their recent visit, children were given the opportunity to paint their own interpretation, with very colourful and charming results. After school clubs such as Karate, drama and after school care are available for the older children.

There are good arrangements in place to support children who speak English as an additional language and they are assimilated into the school in a very short time. Children who have learning difficulties are given good support within their class.

The quality of teaching is good and results in good progress. All parents agreed that this was so in the pre-inspection questionnaire. Children are motivated, attentive and keen to learn and to contribute to the lesson. Many are articulate and make good contributions to class discussions. The teachers are good at linking children's experiences and encouraging them to share them with others. For example, during a literacy lesson, where children were asked to predict what may happen next in the story they were being read, they children gave interesting and thoughtful answers. The school day runs like clockwork and most lessons proceed smoothly. There are relatively small numbers of children in each class and they are given very good staff support, both by the teacher and the assistants. In the most effective lessons teachers plan to meet the needs of all ability levels, share what they were going to learn with the class, ensure that questioning extends children's learning and show them how they can improve their work and think for themselves. Children are industrious and most complete their given tasks without question, however, on some occasions these tasks are insufficiently stimulating with an over reliance on worksheets. In these cases children have insufficient opportunities for independent investigative learning, particularly for the older and more able. The teachers are good at explaining to children what is going to happen in the lessons and what they are going to do. However, in some individual lessons teachers do not make it sufficiently clear to the children what they are going to learn through these activities. The checking of learning during lessons is good but children are not always encouraged to recall what they have learnt at the end of the lesson.

The planning of the curriculum is consistently good. The staff know the children very well and use this knowledge effectively to plan a range of suitable learning activities. The teachers make much of the learning fun, for example, in French, playing games recognising the days of the week and in music, singing and accompanying themselves on percussion instruments. The teachers are careful to nurture each individual and give them praise and encouragement for effort using positive phrases such as 'I like the way you are waiting', rather than focus on the negative. Children respond very well to this encouragement and the high expectation set by their teachers. Children report that they enjoy school saying 'I love my work... I love music... my teacher is nice'. The staff are diligent in ensuring that children move carefully around the difficult building, with many stairs, and the response of the children is outstanding.

The assessment of children's learning is good. The teachers are using the Foundation Stage Profile effectively to record children's progress towards the early learning goals and are recording significant milestones along the way. In addition, they compile a comprehensive portfolio for each child, which shows their progress and experiences through photographs, illustrations and creative work, all carefully presented and annotated by the teachers. Children and parents alike appreciate this record. Parents can make an appointment to see the head teacher at a convenient time and the staff make themselves available to speak to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with some aspects of their personal development, including their behaviour, being outstanding. They are gaining considerably in self-confidence and assurance; have a clear idea of right and wrong and a sense of what it is to be a member of the school community. There is a strong family feeling at the school even though it is relatively large. Relationships are very good at all levels. The drama and concert productions are a highlight of the school year and children take very active roles. Children clearly enjoy their school life and their high levels of attendance confirm that they love coming to school. Frequent opportunities are taken to extend children's first hand experience, for example caterpillars being watched currently to see when they turn into butterflies, children observed them during the day with obvious excitement and pleasure. As part of the Foundation Stage curriculum children study the festivals of major world religions and learn about the lives of peoples from a range of world cultures. The school has a close association with a school in Kenya and children recently enjoyed 'Africa Week' with music, dressing up and creative activities. They enjoy playing together in the attractive outdoor play areas, where playtimes are staggered to ensure that everyone has sufficient space. Children are encouraged to eat healthy, wholesome food and lunch times are pleasant social occasions where good manners are encouraged.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes outstanding provision for the welfare, health and safety of the children. It is a safe place in which to work and learn. The school encourages children to be aware of their own safety and well being. Health and safety and behaviour policies are implemented effectively. The school is aware of the latest guidance for safeguarding children and staff have received up-to-date training in safeguarding matters. The school is very vigilant with regard to welfare, health and safety. All areas of the school have been risk assessed and detailed risk assessments are carried out before each visit outside school. Staff are trained in first aid, well-stocked first aid boxes are located where needed, and accidents are diligently

recorded. Children are very well supervised at all times. The school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has robust procedures in place to ensure that all staff are checked for their suitability to work with children. Appropriate staff appointment procedures are in place and the school has established a central record of staff information.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are good. The school is run in a large detached period house, which has been adapted for use as a school. The current owners have begun a planned programme of repair and redecoration, which is enhancing the building and outdoor provision. The individual classrooms are attractive learning environments, decorated with examples of children's work, and celebrating achievement. Some of the classrooms are not large but the number of children is adjusted to the size of the room. There is an attractive outdoor play area, part of which is due to be updated during the summer break. The school does not currently have appropriate facilities where children who fall ill may rest whilst waiting to be collected by parents.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents, carers and others with a good range of information through the prospectus, the parent's handbook and their new website. Parents are provided with two detailed reports each year on their child's progress and confirm in the pre-inspection questionnaire that they are kept well informed. Parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and made comments such as, 'I am really happy with the ethos of the school.'

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a set of procedures, which meets the regulations. A small number of parents are unaware of them; the school is taking steps to address this.

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 premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for children who are ill in accordance with the *Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999* (paragraph 5(l)).

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:

- provide more opportunities for children's independent learning, through ensuring that all children are consistently challenged
- ensure that all lessons are focused on what the children are going to learn through the activities and this is shared with the children.

Inspection of funded nursery education

Effectiveness of the funded nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Staff are enthusiastic as they promote all aspects of the children's learning and development. The children have an excellent attitude to learning and are purposefully engaged throughout the day. The children's individual progress is observed and information recorded is used to plan for the next steps in the children's development. Staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage enables them to provide activities that are stimulating, challenging and fun. Staff work extremely hard to provide practical experiences for the children, subsequently, the children flourish in this positive environment. Staff and children enjoy good relationships with each other; staff listen intently to the children and respond to their needs and choices. Children are keen to offer their own ideas and respond to challenges with enthusiasm.

They enjoy their meal and snack times as a social occasion; however, they are unable to serve themselves, meaning they are not independent at meal times. Children are very confident, offer ideas and respond to challenges with enthusiasm. The children play well together; they are kind and considerate to each other as they share and take turns. The children have an excellent awareness of right and wrong, and show good respect for others and their beliefs. This strong emphasis means children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children have many opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through discussion and well planned topics. Children's individual needs are recorded and respected by all staff, meaning their welfare is promoted.

The leadership and management of the setting are good. The management and staff work very well together meaning children learn and develop in a harmonious atmosphere.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are comfortable in the environment; they receive good clear information about the setting and the Foundation Stage. Staff exchange information with parents and carers on a daily basis. Children's progress is recorded and shared with parents at parents' evenings or at parents' request.

Recommendations or actions to improve the funded nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of the nursery education the registered person should take account of the following recommendations:

- improve meal time arrangements to enhance children's independence.

School details

Name of school	North Bridge House School – Nursery		
DfES number	Department 202/6195		
Unique reference number	100071		
Unique reference number (funded nursery education)	EY240425		
Type of school	Nursery/ pre-preparatory		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1938		
Age range of children	2 years eight months to 6 years		
Gender of children	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time children)	Boys: 47	Girls: 51	Total: 98
Number on roll (part-time children)	Boys: 45	Girls: 35	Total: 80
Number of children receiving funded nursery education	Boys: 61	Girls: 55	Total: 116
Annual fees	£3,060 to £10, 250		
Address of school	33 Fitzjohn's Avenue London NW3 5JY		
Telephone number	0207435 9641		
Email address	Robyn.allsopp@nbhnursery.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Robyn Allsopp		
Proprietor	Cognita Schools		
Childcare Inspector	Julie Biddle		
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton		
Dates of inspection	12-13 June 2007		