

Lion House School

Old Methodist Hall, Gwendolen Avenue, London SW15 6EH

Inspection dates

20–22 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The school is a happy and harmonious environment, where each child is treasured.
- Leaders are ambitious to improve all aspects of the school. In this they are fully supported by the staff, who back their leaders strongly.
- Leaders have preserved the special character of the school, while bringing in changes that benefit the pupils. Parents strongly support the leaders, and love the school.
- Leaders ensure that the quality of teaching throughout the school is excellent. The teaching enables each pupil to learn extremely well. Teaching fully meets pupils' needs.
- As a result of excellent teaching, pupils throughout the school make very strong progress. They leave school with reading, writing and mathematical skills that equip them extremely well for the next phase of learning.
- The curriculum is extremely rich, enabling pupils to learn a very wide range of skills. The curriculum stimulates pupils' imaginations and deepens their understanding of the world around them. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- Pupils' behaviour is extremely cooperative. Pupils are highly sociable. They respect others. They are kind to one another and polite to visitors.
- The school is extremely safe. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe when out and about.
- Children in the early years have a wonderful start to their education. The indoor areas have a stimulating range of activities that promote high-quality learning. Occasionally there are too few chances for children to develop language and number skills in the outdoor play areas.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'). The school also meets the requirements of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities for children in the Nursery and Reception classes to learn a wider range of skills in the outdoor play areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Since taking responsibility for the school, the new leadership team has built on the school's strengths and improved it further. They understand its special character and have been at pains to preserve what is best about the school, while making necessary changes. For example, the building is being refurbished, so that spaces are now used more efficiently, and fresh resources have been brought in. These changes are already improving pupils' learning even further.
- Changes have been welcomed by the staff. One member of staff commented, 'I can honestly say the whole transition has been wonderful.' Another commented, 'We already benefit from new resources and professional training.' As a result of ambitious leadership, the school is going from strength to strength.
- The school is much loved by parents. One described it as 'a village school in the middle of London'. Another commented, 'The new leaders have kept the flame alive.'
- Links between school and home are strong. For example, parents are encouraged to write about 'wow moments', where the pupils show at home how they benefit from their learning. A typical example was when a parent wrote that their child 'played school with his sister' during half term.
- Leaders are sustaining the high quality of teaching observed at the previous inspection. They have set up a review of staff training, in order to increase opportunities for staff to refresh their skills.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. Pupils learn strong literacy and numeracy skills through topics that interest them and capture their imagination. In a typical example, pupils learning phonics acted out 'ow' sounds as they pretended to prick their finger while sewing. In another example, pupils learned to add by pretending to be palæontologists, discovering toy dinosaurs in sand, and counting the 'spots' on the toys' backs.
- The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of trips and visits to places of interest such as theatres and museums. Such experiences, combined with imaginative teaching, promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development highly effectively.
- Pupils benefit from learning music, drama and sport from specialist teachers. For instance, in a karate session, pupils were completely focused on acquiring the skills involved in using different parts of their feet.
- The curriculum strongly establishes in pupils an excellent understanding of fundamental British values. For example, pupils showed inspectors that they understand what is meant by the monarchy and why it is important. Even the youngest children recognise such institutions as the police and fire brigade.
- Leaders are meticulous in ensuring that all independent standards are met. They also fully meet all requirements of the early years framework, including requirements for the care and welfare of two-year-olds. Adults look after these children with the utmost care and professionalism. Adults carry out statutory assessments of two-year-olds and share these with parents. Pupils throughout the school benefit from the leaders' meticulous

safeguarding arrangements.

Governance

- The principal is very hands-on, and spends a great deal of time at the school, holding leaders to account extremely effectively. The parent school has a board of advisers to provide expertise and hold that school to account. At this early stage the board has not yet undertaken full responsibility for Lion House School. The principal successfully governs, leads and manages the school, together with the headmaster and the on-site head of nursery and pre-preparatory.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school publishes a comprehensive safeguarding policy on its website, and copies are available on paper to those parents who wish to see it. The policy meets statutory requirements and provides clear guidance on keeping pupils safe and promoting their welfare.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Adults know which leaders are responsible for keeping pupils safe. Leaders know which external agencies to contact if they have any concern about a pupil. There is always someone on site with responsibility for the safety of the pupils.
- The school scrupulously checks the backgrounds of all those who come into contact with the pupils.
- The school complies fully with the early years statutory requirements for safeguarding and welfare. Staff are trained in first aid procedures for young children. Their training is kept up to date.
- Adults are trained in recognising signs of neglect or abuse, including child exploitation. Adults are trained to spot signs of radicalisation or extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is consistently of a very high quality throughout the school.
- Teaching is excellent across a range of subjects. It is stimulating and adults' expectations are high. As a result, pupils learn extremely well. As a typical example, in science pupils were fully engaged in making mini-volcanoes. As another example, in music pupils were absorbed in learning a demanding song in preparation for Mother's Day.
- Adults encourage pupils to be independent and to think for themselves. In one activity, for example, key stage 1 pupils were given only the first and third lines of a ditty and were asked to find the second and fourth lines for themselves. The task challenged pupils to be creative, and also to think about both rhyme and rhythm. Pupils rose to the challenge and came up with lively ditties. They clearly enjoyed the challenge.
- The skilled and experienced teachers and their assistants provide teaching that meets the needs of all pupils extremely well. Those who are ready to forge ahead receive

additional challenges. Those who need extra time to catch up are supported in calm and purposeful ways. As a result of individualised teaching, all make extremely strong progress in their learning.

- All subjects are taught with the same proficiency. Adults have a deep knowledge of the subjects they teach. Reading is a particular strength. Pupils read fluently and with expression. They can explain the purpose of various punctuation marks. They speak enthusiastically about how the school encourages them to read worthwhile books.
- The small-school ethos benefits pupils as they progress seamlessly from the Nursery to Year 2. There are no sudden 'jumps' or breaks from one year group to another. This is because all the adults know the pupils and plan for effective transition from one step to the next. As a result, pupils move confidently through the school and remain eager to learn.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Parents told inspectors that the school is safe and, in the words of one, is 'a nurturing environment'. A pupil told an inspector, 'We feel safe in school because our teachers look after us.' In this safe and secure setting, pupils are ready and eager to learn.
- The school produces pupils who are confident, articulate and polite to visitors. They are considerate when moving about the building and when going up and down stairs. Though the outdoor play areas are small, pupils are thoughtful and wait their turn on the play equipment.
- The school provides pupils with the skills they need to keep themselves safe. Pupils told inspectors that the school teaches them to be careful when using computers, or when crossing roads or encountering strangers.
- The school is a kind place, where adults are extremely caring. A pupil told inspectors, 'Teachers help us learn and they help us if we are sad.' In turn, pupils are considerate towards others. A pupil summed this up in the comment, 'Children are kind and we share what we have with one another.'
- Pupils understand what is meant by bullying and the different forms it can take, such as cyber bullying. Pupils say that there is no bullying at the school. The school's records confirm this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils cooperate with one another. They enjoy opportunities to discuss topics with one another in class, and their discussions are purposeful and focused.
- Classroom behaviour is extremely positive. Pupils understand the rules, and are keen to 'stay on the green light' and not move to amber or red. Pupils respond quickly when asked to move about the classroom or move on to a different topic. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as serving on the school council.

- The breakfast club, run by the school, provides those who attend with healthy food options and worthwhile activities. After-school clubs give pupils a range of enjoyable activities. In one such club, pupils clearly relished the chance to acquire skills in street dance, and participated with enthusiasm.
- Pupils keep their books neat and the classrooms tidy. Classrooms are welcoming, and pupils gain a sense of pride from seeing their work displayed on the walls.
- Pupils demonstrate their enthusiasm for school through their very good attendance patterns, with no persistent absences.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make very strong progress throughout their time at the school. Children enter the Nursery classes with language, number and social skills that vary considerably but are generally typical of those of their age. By the time children leave the Reception Year, almost all gain a good level of development. This achievement is considerably higher than for the country as a whole.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to make very strong progress. By the time they leave, pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics are considerably higher than average. For example, seven-year-olds leaving the school typically have reading and spelling ages that approach those generally expected of pupils leaving junior school at the age of 11.
- Pupils make strong progress in a range of skills, as well as in reading, writing and mathematics. Some subjects, such as drama, music and sport, are taught by specialist teachers. This enables pupils to benefit from the adults' specialist knowledge and learn new and demanding skills extremely well.
- Outcomes for the most able pupils are extremely strong, because there is no cap on these pupils' learning. Pupils who need more support, such as those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, receive caring support from adults and make similar progress to others. Parents of these pupils appreciate the support that their children receive both from the school and the external agencies it works with. Parents told inspectors they can see the benefit of this support in their children's learning and increased confidence.
- Pupils' strong progress and high attainment prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage of schooling. Pupils go on confidently to a range of high-achieving preparatory schools.
- Leaders carefully check pupils' skills as they move through the school. The effective checking systems enable adults to target support where it is most needed. As a result, no pupil falls behind and all learn extremely well.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The Nursery and Reception classes provide children with an excellent start to their education.
- Leaders are justly proud of improvements they have made, including training staff to assess and record children's progress in clear, user-friendly ways. Leaders have ambitious plans for future improvements, including refurbishing areas of the indoor provision to make the play materials even more accessible to children than they are already.
- The consistently outstanding teaching ensures that each child is valued, so that the needs of each individual are met. Adults are tender and caring towards the youngest children, who start at the age of two. These children are gently encouraged to socialise with others. Adults take their time and do not rush the children as they acquire skills in cutting, pasting and making marks on paper. Such patience enables these young children to gain in confidence. Adults successfully encourage two-year-olds to develop as much independence as their older peers in the Nursery classes.
- Much of the early years provision is taught through music. In this way, children learn not only to sing, but also to develop good coordination and acquire a sense of rhythm. During the group singing activities, adults use every opportunity to encourage children to make choices. For example, children vote on which songs to sing. Adults use the opportunity to develop children's number skills by counting the votes and reinforcing such concepts as 'more' and 'fewer'.
- Adults seize every opportunity to develop children's speaking and thinking skills. For example, one activity involved the children in handling and describing pasta before and after it was soaked. The children were fully engaged and came up with some lively descriptions, such as, 'It's soft like a snake.'
- Children are encouraged to read. They can often be seen curled up with a book or gathered round an adult reading to them. Children are encouraged to make marks and begin writing as soon as they are able to hold a writing implement. Adults use every opportunity to count and do sums. As a result of such excellent teaching, children's literacy and numeracy skills are highly developed. Children are ready to move into Year 1 with a secure spread of skills and with the confidence to use and develop their skills.
- The school promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. For example, children learned about China to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Children making paper lanterns clearly explained to the inspectors what they were doing, and one added, 'Red is a lucky colour for the Chinese.'
- The school develops in children a strong sense of fundamental British values. Children are kind and respectful towards those from all faiths and heritages. Children are taught to respect such institutions as the fire brigade and police force. They go on trips and have visitors coming into school who teach them about a range of jobs, including going to the doctor and dentist.
- Children get on extremely well with one another, and are kind to others. Inspectors heard children actively cooperating, such as telling others to join in their construction game, saying, 'You help me to build it.'

- There are excellent links between school and home. Parents told inspectors that they welcome opportunities to learn how to help their children, for instance in phonics workshops. The school also works in effective partnership with a range of external agencies to provide for children needing support with their language and communication skills.
- Children make extremely strong progress throughout the early years provision. They leave with skills far ahead of those typical for their age. Their 'learning journeys' provide ample proof of children's progress in their learning, and are a valued keepsake for parents.
- The early years provision is led exceptionally well. Leaders are scrupulous in ensuring that all independent school standards and requirements of the early years statutory framework are met.
- The indoor play areas provide an extremely wide range of resources that promote high-quality learning. The school has made the best use of the small outdoor play areas to promote children's physical skills. These play areas are used well to enable children to climb and balance. Leaders recognise that children also need more opportunities to learn a wider range of skills, including language and number skills, outdoors as well as indoors.

School details

Unique reference number	101087
DfE registration number	212/6391
Inspection number	10035777

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Number of part-time pupils	62
Proprietor	Lion House School Ltd
Chair	Fiona Goulden (principal)
Headteacher	Fiona Goulden (principal), Jonathan Brough (headmaster of Hurlingham and Lion House), Jane Appleby (head of nursery and pre-preparatory)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,653 to £13,848
Telephone number	020 8780 9446
Website	www.lionhouseschool.co.uk
Email address	office@lionhouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–22 May 2014

Information about this school

- Lion House School was founded by its proprietor in 1985 as a nursery school. In 1992 it expanded to include pre-preparatory provision. In September 2017, ownership of the school was transferred to the proprietors of Hurlingham School, a nearby independent preparatory school for pupils aged four to 11.
- The principal is chair of the board of directors that owns both Lion House and Hurlingham. The headmaster divides his time between Lion House and Hurlingham. The

head of nursery and pre-preparatory is based at Lion House School.

- The school consists of the early years section (Nursery and Reception classes) and the pre-preparatory section (a mixed class of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils).
- The school occupies a large converted church hall.
- The school's ethos is to be 'a happy community where individuality is nurtured and encouragement given to all'.
- No pupil has an education, health and care plan.
- No child is eligible for support from the early years pupil premium.
- The school was last inspected by Ofsted in May 2014, when it was judged to be outstanding in all aspects of its work.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in both the early years and the pre-preparatory sections of the school. All the adults were observed. Leaders accompanied inspectors on several of their observations.
- Inspectors observed teaching in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, music and karate. Inspectors visited the breakfast club and after-school activities, including street dance.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and listened to them read. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. They observed the pupils at play.
- Inspectors held discussions with leaders and with the proprietor.
- Inspectors spoke to around a third of the parent body during the inspection. There were 22 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 12 written comments. Inspectors took all responses and comments into consideration.
- Inspectors took account of 21 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire for members of staff.
- Inspectors reviewed documents and policies, including those related to safeguarding, in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence on pupils' attainment and progress. They also examined safeguarding information and records relating to attendance, behaviour and welfare.

Inspection team

Natalia Power, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Danvir Visvanathan

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018