



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**FINTON HOUSE SCHOOL**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Finton House School

Full Name of School	<b>Finton House School</b>
DCSF Number	<b>212/6365</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>269588</b>
Address	<b>Finton House School 171 Trinity Road London SW17 7HL</b>
Telephone Number	<b>020 8682 0921</b>
Fax Number	<b>020 8767 5017</b>
Email Address	<b>Adrian.Floyd@fintonhouse.org.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Adrian Floyd</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Clare Clark</b>
Age Range	<b>4 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>303</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (111 boys; 192 girls;)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5 (EYFS): 60      5-11: 243</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>303</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>15 Mar 2010 to 16 Mar 2010</b>

## PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)* schedule for INTERIM inspections. The inspection is a two day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in May 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Finton House is located in two Victorian town houses, in a residential area near Wandsworth Common, which have been imaginatively joined to accommodate the school. As a charitable trust, the school is guided by a governing body. Finton House was founded in 1987, as a non-selective preparatory school for boys and girls aged from 4 to 11. The founding aim of integrating children with special needs remains very important, and thus the school benefits from an exceptionally high staff to pupil ratio.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a broad curriculum in which all pupils can reach a high academic standard according to their ability, within an atmosphere of warmth, care and respect where pupils are happy, motivated to learn and progress at their own levels.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, a considerable redevelopment and refurbishment programme of the ground floor of the main building now includes a new kitchen, an ICT suite, improved offices and a medical room. A purpose-built Reception building and a music block are situated adjacent to a well-equipped and well-used playground. Spacious playing fields are close by.
- 1.4 At present, 303 pupils attend the school, from Reception to Year 6. Of these, 32 boys and 30 girls are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school does not assess pupils on entry except when they enter the older classes. Pupils are largely from professional British families. Pupils come mainly from the area local to the school.
- 1.5 Pupils with special needs are seen by an educational psychologist about 14 months before they are due to enter, to ensure that they will be able to benefit from the education the school can provide. Currently up to three pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) are integrated into each year group. Sixty-two further pupils have also been identified by the school as having some form of learning difficulty or disability (LDD), of whom sixty-one receive learning support from the school. No pupil has English as an additional language. The range of ability of the pupils is very wide but overall is above the national average.
- 1.6 The majority of the school's leavers transfer to selective independent schools, both day and boarding, many gaining awards; a very small number transfer to maintained schools.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

### **The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills**

- 2.1 Standards are excellent, and progress is excellent overall. The pupils' educational experiences enable them to attain very well academically in relation to their abilities. Across the school, all pupils, including those with specific needs, make rapid progress. The high level of staff commitment and care is evident through their shared goals and the school motto 'Open Hearts and Guiding Hands'. Pupils are quick to settle, apply themselves thoughtfully and take pride in their work, showing perseverance and enthusiasm. The behaviour of the pupils overall is exemplary; they are polite, well mannered and happy.
- 2.2 Literacy standards are excellent. Pupils write fluently, both creatively and factually. Mathematical understanding is of a high quality. The pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing well, and their use in cross-curricular activities is effectively integrated into the wider curriculum. The high quality of learning and standards has been maintained and built on since the previous inspection, and meets the school's aim of educating pupils at their own level in a co-educational, mixed ability school. Pupils requiring support with their learning benefit from the most subtle and sensitive strategies, which ensure that their school experience is successful and that they make rapid progress both in lessons and over periods of time. Pupils are successful in their entrance examinations to senior schools, many gaining awards.
- 2.3 The curriculum is excellent, being broadly based and accessible to all pupils, contributing positively to their development in all areas of learning within the National Curriculum subjects, and additionally in religious education (RE), personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), and French. The tracking of the pupils' progress over time is detailed and extremely thorough. Curriculum planning is directly informed by the use of extensive and detailed assessment data; material for pupils requiring support with their learning is seamlessly integrated into classroom planning and delivery.
- 2.4 The school encourages and nurtures the pupils' talents outside lessons and through individual and group activities in all the creative arts, sport and academic pursuits; they achieve high levels of success locally and nationally. The extra-curricular activities programme is extensive and diverse and includes dance, art and sport. Pupils speak very highly of their enjoyment of the programme offered.
- 2.5 Since the previous inspection, the newly refurbished and well equipped ICT suite offers excellent provision and its use across the school has increased. Interactive whiteboards and networked computers have been installed in all teaching areas. These are used well by teachers and have enhanced pupils' access to ICT. The school is aware that the current number of laptop computers places limits on opportunities for pupils to extend their independent work and personal research.

- 2.6 In the sample of lessons observed, teaching was good overall and a high proportion was excellent. In all lessons seen, the teaching matched the needs of all pupils. In particular, the differing capabilities of pupils are supported well by generous staffing levels in all classrooms. Good learning habits are encouraged, the level of challenge is high, and the opportunities for independent working are widely evident across all year groups. Additionally, 'G&T Days' link the most able pupils with those in local maintained and independent schools to pursue extended challenge. Marking is thorough and takes careful account of pupils' abilities, offering detailed comments to help them improve their work.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.7 The pupils' personal development is excellent, and a strength of the school. The spiritual, social and moral aspects of the pupils' development are excellent.
- 2.8 Spiritual awareness is successfully developed through assemblies, providing for personal reflection, and through the PSHCE and RE programmes, which guide their understanding of tolerance and harmony amongst the pupil body and the wider community; as a result the pupils are confident, articulate and are able to hold views of value. There is, for example, real generosity in their attitudes to those who have difficulty with their work, or who have outstanding attributes. They discuss openly without prejudice, and outside the classroom take a major role in overseeing one another's well-being. A variety of pupil-led fundraising charity events, such as the recent very popular cake sale, happen throughout the year in support of local and national charities, which helps pupils to develop a good awareness of the needs of those less fortunate in society. Moral development is excellent; it permeates the daily life of the school and staff act as good role models. Consequently the pupils have a tremendous sense of what is right and wrong and are encouraged to consider friendship, responsibility and relationships in different ways. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of major world religions, different cultures and citizenship is developing well through events such as the balloon debate, which allowed pupils to understand the value of choice and how they can exercise it in the democratic process of voting.
- 2.9 The quality of the pastoral care and the attention given to the welfare, health and safety of pupils is excellent throughout the school, giving pupils a broad range of support from the staff leading to strong relationships at all levels; issues or conflicts rarely occur. The pupils have a strong sense of what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour, and bullying in any form is not tolerated. They are confident that on the rare occasions it does arise it is dealt with quickly and effectively, and strategies such as the use of a "worry box" enable the children to manage their concerns well. Pupils are extremely well cared for by all staff; appropriate medical arrangements are in place, including for those pupils with serious medical conditions. The improvements in the facilities for providing balanced and healthy meals since the previous inspection have improved pupils' awareness of the importance of healthy eating. The health and safety committee, which includes a governor, the headmaster and bursar, meets termly and concerns relating to health and safety are discussed at weekly staff meetings. The school ensures that all reasonable measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken. Risk assessments are undertaken in all areas of the school, and those for the health and safety of pupils on school trips are comprehensive and secure.

## **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.10 Governance is excellent, with an effective range of expertise and skills available. The governing body meets regularly and is well-defined with appropriate structures, including an educational committee. The school's management team attend all governors meetings, so enabling governors to oversee the work of the school successfully. They are actively involved in all aspects of school development. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. Policies and procedures to ensure the school's full compliance with regulatory requirements are under regular review. The chair of governors has completed training in safer recruitment.
- 2.11 Leadership and management are excellent. Through the headmaster and senior team, the school is led with vision and a commitment to achieving the best possible standards in academic pursuits, pastoral care and personal development of pupils. Senior managers are strong and effective across the whole range of school activity, allowing significant delegation to take place. Their understanding of what is required in terms of monitoring, assessment, planning, peer-mentoring and appraisals is excellent. Senior leaders work extremely well together and involve all staff in discussions, which lead to overall ownership of decisions reached and policies set. They have a good vision for the future of the school and are working to ensure the best possible provision for its pupils. The school's founding aim of offering an inclusive environment where all children, including those with specific needs, have the same opportunities is well fulfilled.
- 2.12 Child protection and other safeguarding policies, including staff recruitment and training, meet all statutory requirements. Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained, in accordance with requirements. The accommodation, maintained to a high standard, is clean and well decorated. Space in all areas is used to maximum advantage and every effort has been made to offer a wide a range of facilities to support pupils in their learning.
- 2.13 The provision of information to parents meets requirements, is helpful and informative, and includes parent handbooks, weekly newsletters and access to a helpful and informative school website. Opportunities for pupils to use the website are currently limited and a valuable opportunity for allowing parents to become more involved with their learning is missed. Reports are of high quality and provide guidance as to how pupils might improve their work.
- 2.14 Through the pre-inspection questionnaires, both parents and pupils are unanimous in their satisfaction with the school. They are extremely pleased with the quality of education and care provided by the school. The school handles the concerns of parents carefully and sensitively.

### **3. ACTION POINTS**

#### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended.
- 3.2 The school's provision for childcare met the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and no action was required

#### **(ii) Recommended action**

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop secure pupil/parent sections of the website so pupils are able to share their work with parents to further extend and promote their independent learning at home.
  2. Extend the opportunities for pupils to make the best use of the laptop computers in their cross-curricular work.
  3. Develop the quality and consistency of outdoor learning opportunities for children to strengthen and enrich the full range of experiences required by the EYFS curriculum.
  4. Create more opportunities for the children in EYFS to learn independently within the constraints of a specialist-teaching timetable, in order to assist the consolidation of the high-quality input children receive.

#### **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

##### **(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.1 The effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. It is a place where the uniqueness of every child is recognised and supported to ensure that children reach their full potential. The capacity for maintaining these high standards is outstanding. Aspirational leadership identifies areas for development, which are quickly acted on to provide a highly effective place of early learning and development. Links with outside agencies and the rest of the school are effective. Parents are clearly partners in their children's learning and are expected to contribute to their progress. Responses to questionnaires evidence parents' strong appreciation of the work of the school, for example: "I could not wish for my daughter to be at a better school."

##### **(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.2 The leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding. At all levels staff are entirely committed to ensuring that every child reaches their full potential. The headteacher provides effective strategic steering, which develops the qualities of leadership in all staff resulting in a highly effective team of EYFS practitioners. Resources of good quality are planned for as part of school improvement initiatives.

4.3 Processes and procedures for safeguarding are excellent and all requirements are fully complied with. Policies and procedures effectively promote inclusion, and discrimination is eliminated. Teachers, led by the EYFS co-ordinator, continually evaluate their practice and from this create a clear plan for future improvement with children at its heart. Change is implemented with the involvement of all relevant staff, parents and children. The children's needs are exceptionally well met through strong partnerships including outside agencies; highly effective use is made of specialized staff and appropriate resources. There are no breaches in statutory requirements.

##### **(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.4 The provision for children in the EYFS at Finton House is good. The children's well-being, in terms of learning as well as social and emotional development, is paramount. Effective planning ensures that the children's needs are met, and arrangements for special educational needs are exemplary. All adults are skilled and dedicated professionals. Specialist staff add quality to the children's learning experiences and provide them with the knowledge and skills demonstrated in the children's high levels of achievement.

4.5 Independence is actively promoted; opportunities for the children to lead their own learning are provided and are of good quality. Timetable constraints restrict the quantity of these occasions, which sometimes leads to an **over-prescriptive** curriculum. Positive relationships are promoted at every opportunity and the children's behaviour is exemplary. Outdoor learning is planned and provided in the EYFS, and the school has clear plans to develop this further.

**(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 4.6 Outcomes for children are outstanding. Within the context of a non-selective establishment, children achieve well and make good progress during their time in the establishment. Skills for life are developed at every opportunity. Behaviour and relationships are exemplary. Children demonstrate confidence and consideration for others, quite exceptional for such young people. Good hygiene practices are intrinsic to the school's routines, and the highly nutritious food available at lunchtimes encourages the children to make healthy food choices. Motivation for learning is strong and positive. Children respond well to the wealth of challenges offered to them.
- 4.7 Exceptionally high levels of literacy are promoted constantly and high levels of competent teaching skilfully tackle any weakness effectively. Numeracy skills are practiced at every opportunity, and outstanding teaching of ICT has a clear impact on the children's abilities with regard to this area of the curriculum.

**What the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve is given in section 3.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Frank Skipwith

Mrs Diane Gardiner

Mrs Diane Gray

Mrs Louise Savage

Reporting Inspector

Assistant Reporting Inspector

Early Years Lead Inspector

Early Years Team Inspector (Former EYFS head, HMC school)