



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Paul's Cathedral School

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| Full Name of School/College | St Paul's Cathedral School | | |
| DfE Number | 201/6006 | | |
| Registered Charity Number | 312718 | | |
| Address | St Paul's Cathedral School 2 New Change London C4M 9AD | | |
| Telephone Number | 020 72485156 | | |
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| Email Address | admissions@spcs.london.sch.uk | | |
| Head | Mr Neil Chippington | | |
| Chair of Governors | The Right Rev'd Graeme Knowles | | |
| Age Range | 4 to 13 | | |
| Total Number of Pupils | 232 | | |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed (145 boys; 87 girls;) | | |
| Numbers by Age | 4-5 (EYFS): | 19 | 11-13: 39 |
| | 5-11: | 174 | |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: | 199 | Capacity for flexi-boarding: None |
| Number of Boarders | Total: | 33 | |
| | Full: | 23 | Weekly: 10 |
| Head of EYFS Setting | Mrs Vicky Penfold | | |
| EYFS Gender | Mixed | | |
| Inspection dates | 28 Jun 2011 to 29 Jun 2011 | | |

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 2007.

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 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, 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 31st 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.

A specific inspection of boarding was not carried out and the report does not contain judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Any comments on boarding arising from this inspection are in the context of the school as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced in December 2010 by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Paul's Cathedral School is a co-educational day school for pupils from the age of four to thirteen with boarding provision for the cathedral's boy choristers from the age of seven. It traces its origins back to the 12th Century and existed for several centuries solely for the education of the cathedral choristers. It moved to its current location, close to the cathedral, in the 1960s and began to admit boys who were not choristers as pupils in the 1980s. The school has been fully co-educational since 2002. The school is owned by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral, its governing body comprising seven lay members and five Canons, chaired by the Dean. The provision of choristers, all of whom are boarders, to the cathedral remains the school's primary function. The school's pre-preparatory department opened in 1998.
- 1.2 The school aims, within a Christian community, to instil a love of learning through a broad curriculum, giving each pupil the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially, personally, physically, culturally and spiritually. It seeks to encourage its pupils to achieve excellence and develop their independence and mutual responsibility. Within an atmosphere where the welfare of each child is of the utmost importance, the school encourages close partnerships with parents and aims to promote positive relationships, where the values of love, justice, tolerance, respect, honesty, service and trust are practised.
- 1.3 The school caters for 232 pupils, just under two-thirds being boys. Nineteen pupils attend the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), all full-time, where the numbers of boys and girls are approximately equal. Most pupils come from professional families. The pupil population includes a small number of pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and none with a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 40 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), of whom 21 receive specialist learning support from the school. Results of standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the school is above the national average with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented. The majority of pupils are of at least above average ability, with a significant proportion having an ability profile that is far above average.
- 1.4 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 Pupils' achievements are good overall and fulfill the school's aim of enabling children to reach their potential. They articulate their ideas confidently and coherently, demonstrate excellent reading skills, listen attentively and ask perceptive questions. Their performance in numeracy is strong and they develop a good level of competence in information and communication technology (ICT). Their physical skills develop strongly through a well-balanced physical activities programme. Many are successful in graded music examinations and the sports teams have a good record of success. Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. Almost all pupils are successful in entrance examinations to their chosen selective senior schools, a significant proportion gaining academic, sports and music scholarships. Typically, all choristers gain a music scholarship to their senior schools. This level of attainment, as noted in the scrutiny of work and observation of lessons, indicates that pupils, including those with LDD, make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. The most able respond well to challenge within and beyond the curriculum. Pupils' achievements are extremely well supported by their excellent attitudes towards learning, their good behaviour and their ability to work hard, individually and co-operatively. They are well-focused and keen to succeed.
- 2.2 The broad curriculum and large range of stimulating extra-curricular activities strongly contribute to the pupils' achievements and personal development, enabling them to demonstrate initiative and extending their educational experience most successfully. The personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme reflects the school's aim to prepare pupils for their future life and also enables them to learn about health related issues. The provision of extra challenge for the most able pupils, support for the least able and the division of older year groups into ability groups enable pupils to work at levels appropriate to their ability. In response to a recommendation at the previous inspection, the library has been relocated and extensively improved, resulting in it becoming a very well-used resource. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of interest, both in the locality and abroad, visitors to the school and the use of the cathedral as an educational resource.
- 2.3 Good-quality teaching promotes the pupils' high standards of achievement, demonstrating good knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. Lessons are well-planned for clear outcomes. Teaching is characterised by praise and encouragement and demonstrates good knowledge of, and planning for, individual needs. Effective support is provided in lessons, enabled by small class sizes. In the most effective lessons, good open-ended questioning draws out and extends the pupils' knowledge and understanding well, challenging their thinking and stimulating keen debate. However, in a small number of lessons, teaching, while thorough and well-planned, was overly directed and lacked variety, leading to pupils losing focus and restricting spontaneous and independent learning. Marking is thorough and encouraging. Effective assessment ensures that progress is monitored, resulting in potential high achievers and those experiencing difficulties being appropriately identified.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.4 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They are confident and happy and many display insight into their strengths and weaknesses. Their sense of self-worth develops strongly through their participation in extra-curricular activities. Their self-esteem and a strong sense of community are strengthened through school assemblies, in which they gain a firm understanding of topics such as the dangers of bullying and reflect on how their behaviour affects others. Pupils are courteous, friendly, mutually supportive and understand moral choices. They respect the system of sanctions and rewards and see it as fair. They demonstrate excellent social awareness and are generous in their support for charities. Those elected to the school council or other positions of responsibility take their roles seriously. They value being able to express their views and influence change. Pupils show some understanding of the global community and respect for ethnic diversity. Their understanding of cultures other than their own is deepened through overseas trips and studies of comparative religion. Their artwork and involvement in drama and, particularly, in music give them an extensive awareness of their own culture.
- 2.5 The safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good. Staff know them very well and take great care over their particular needs. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Good communication between staff, and also with cathedral staff in connection with the choristers, is a key feature of the care provided. Close attention is paid to the pupils' safety in school, in the cathedral and on off-site visits. Risk assessments include consideration of fire safety and are carefully monitored. First aid and medical matters are organised well and duly recorded. Fire safety measures are secure and emergency evacuations practised regularly. The admissions register meets requirements. Arrangements at the start of the day do not provide a secure record of who is on the premises prior to registration and registers are not rigorously monitored to ensure consistency, although their completion and storage meet requirements. Staff recruitment procedures are thorough; appropriate staff have undertaken safer recruitment training. All staff have undertaken safeguarding training. Measures to prevent bullying and promote positive behaviour are good. Pupils are confident that any bullying is swiftly tackled.
- 2.6 Boarding provision is good and strongly supports the work of the choristers in the cathedral. Boarders, who are all choristers, are accommodated in secure, well-maintained accommodation close to the school and the cathedral. Boarders noted in the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussion with inspectors that they were happy and felt well supported, enabling them to fulfil their cathedral duties successfully. Careful thought is given by both school and cathedral staff to their workload and the demands of their daily routines, enabling them to thrive in the boarding environment and spend time at home when appropriate. Parents are welcomed at appropriate times into the boarding life of the school to support the choristers in their academic studies and recreation.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.7 Governance is good. The governing structure comprises members of the cathedral chapter and lay governors, appointed specifically for their experience and skills, including education, finance and law. It provides strong support to the school and its management. Governors gain a good insight into the working of the school through the head's report, presentations from staff, time spent in school and contact with parents, enabling them to provide strong strategic direction and ensure that their responsibilities for the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are fulfilled. Governors carry out appropriate checks to ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed correctly.
- 2.8 The school, including the EYFS, is led and managed well. The many strong features of leadership and management include well-defined structures to delegate leadership throughout the school and promote cohesion between departments. These arrangements enable managers at all levels to gain a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, as well as enabling the efficient dissemination of information on academic and pastoral matters and the promotion of engagement from staff at all levels. Well-informed analysis of priorities and a clear sense of direction are formalised into a comprehensive school development plan. The school is making good progress in developing procedures for the regular monitoring of standards and an appropriate appraisal system. Some aspects of appraisal remain at an initial stage, which the school recognises as requiring further development. Staff training needs are effectively identified and addressed and a staff curriculum committee successfully oversees curriculum development. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly. Effective procedures to ensure the suitability of staff are carefully recorded and the safeguarding of pupils is secure, strengthened by the recent appointment of a second child protection officer. The school's premises, on a small, compact site, are well maintained. Good use is made of the available space. Stimulating displays of work contribute strongly to the attractiveness of the premises.
- 2.9 The school has strong links with parents, who have various opportunities to be involved in school. They talk to pupils about their professions, and involve themselves with the active parents' association, which provides helpful support through its fund-raising and social events. Communication with parents is good; they are provided with the necessary information about the school, are welcome to make appointments to see staff and formal reporting to parents is thorough and regular. Overall, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were very happy with the school and in particular its leadership and management, the high standards of behaviour and the school's promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views. The school's complaints procedure meets requirements and it handles the concerns of parents with due care and sensitivity.

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 2010.

(ii) Recommendation(s) for further improvement

- 3.2 In order to build further on its strengths, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Strengthen arrangements at the start of the day, to ensure a reliable record of pupils on the premises prior to registration and consistency in the completion of attendance registers.
 2. Share best practice in teaching to ensure consistent standards in the pace and variety of activities in lessons.
 3. In the EYFS, ensure that planning includes provision for the needs of individual children and the use of the outdoor area.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

4.(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 overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. A high adult-to-child ratio ensures that children's needs are very well met. Children thrive and flourish within a family atmosphere because they are supported extremely well by the caring staff. Adults continuously and effectively evaluate their provision and identify areas for improvement, ensuring that high standards are sustained.

4.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.2 Outstanding leadership and management ensure a secure environment where safeguarding is strong and children's welfare is of the utmost importance. Staff have many opportunities to access training and strong links with the local authority enhance outcomes for children. Staff work as a strong team with high aspirations and a clear vision, founded on thorough self evaluation, enabling informed prioritising. Resources are effectively deployed and accessible to children. Rigorous implementation of policies promotes equality and eliminates discrimination. Links with parents are excellent. They are very happy with the education that their children are receiving and there are many opportunities for them to be involved in their learning.

4.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.3 The quality of the provision is good. A welcoming and well-resourced indoor and outside environment provides children with stimulating experiences in every area of learning. Children also benefit from specialist teaching in drama, dance, French and music. A balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities fosters active and independent learning. Staff have an excellent understanding of children's needs and interests and question them very skilfully to challenge their thinking skills. Teaching is good, often outstanding, ensuring a lovely calm atmosphere in the classroom. Observation, planning and organisation are thorough, although individual targets and provision for the different abilities of the children are not written into planning. A wide range of indoor and outdoor resources is easily accessible to children. As recognised in the EYFS development plan, outdoor lessons are not routinely planned. Relationships between staff and children are excellent and children respond well to the expectations of their teachers. Adults give a high priority to safeguarding children and actively promote their health and welfare at all times.

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

- 4.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. They are very enthusiastic, inquisitive and happy learners who make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and begin to develop valuable skills for the future. They are articulate, converse confidently and participate wholeheartedly in their activities, showing excellent perseverance and concentration. They develop independence and make decisions; they listen to each other, learn to take turns and co-operate. Children enjoy choosing their own tasks. They write sentences independently and make logical attempts to spell words correctly. They learn their sounds and read simple reading books. They subtract from more than twenty and are able to record their findings using symbols. They understand that, when subtracting zero, the number stays the same. In ICT they can use a mouse and select tools confidently, for example, when using an art program. Their knowledge of the wider world grows through visits, outings and imaginative role play. They understand about healthy eating and good hygiene practice. Children know what is expected of them and behaviour is exemplary.

Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work and their reports. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and members of the governing body, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors attended choristers' rehearsals and a service in the cathedral and held discussions with a member of the cathedral music staff. They visited the boarding house and 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

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Reporting Inspector

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