



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BUTE HOUSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL STANDARD INSPECTION

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Bute House Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Bute House Preparatory School		
DfE Number	205/6216		
Registered Charity Number	312739		
Address	Bute House Preparatory School Luxemburg Gardens Hammersmith London W6 7EA		
Telephone Number	020 7603 7381		
Fax Number	020 7371 3446		
Email Address	mail@butehouse.co.uk		
Head	Mrs Sallie Salvidant		
Chair of Governors	Mr Simon Wathen		
Age Range	4 to 11		
Total Number of Pupils	314		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	4-5 (EYFS):	22	5-11: 292
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	314	
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection dates	12 Oct 2010 to 13 Oct 2010 08 Nov 2010 to 10 Nov 2010		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2004

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the 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 Standards 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.

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 Bute House Preparatory School opened on the current site as a mixed ability girls' independent day school in 1958. It is located in Hammersmith, West London in modern buildings with playing fields and an adjacent swimming pool. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) occupies spacious rooms with its own playing area, within the school. The school is an educational trust run by a governing body and is a member of the Mercer's Company group of schools.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection there were 314 girls on roll aged four to eleven. Twenty-two children are in the Reception class. From Year 3, each year has three classes. The school does not administer national tests but, from other data available, the average ability of pupils is judged to be above the national average for all maintained primary schools. About one tenth of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most pupils live within 6 kilometres of the school. Sixty-five pupils have been identified by the school to receive support for minor learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), to enable them to access the challenging curriculum. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. A small number of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), although all speak English fluently.
- 1.3 The main aims of the school are to foster all pupils' abilities and talents within a non-competitive framework, encouraging each to become a self-motivated learner and a confident communicator and to achieve her potential; to provide a broad and enriched curriculum which encourages a love of learning; and to maintain a happy, positive atmosphere within a self-disciplined, respectful community. Within the non-competitive ethos every pupil is encouraged to do her best, acknowledging her own progress and recognising personal strengths and weaknesses, and not comparing herself to her peers.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The overall quality of the pupils' educational experience is excellent. Extremely high standards of achievement are evident in both academic work and a wide range of other activities. Pupils are successful in all aspects of their learning, and this is reflected in their considerable success in senior school entrance examinations. The pupils' outstanding development is strongly supported by the broad and interesting curriculum. Extremely well-developed skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) contribute to the pupils' frequently exceptional progress over time. An extensive range of opportunities is offered by the extra-curricular programme, in which most pupils participate. Pupils' achievements are strongly supported by lively, challenging and interesting teaching. Pupils say they really love their learning. They are attentive and interested, and from the earliest age they concentrate well, can work independently, and reason and think for themselves.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is outstanding, being well supported by excellent pastoral care, welfare, health and safety arrangements. From the EYFS onwards pupils are articulate and confident. From entering the welcoming reception area in the morning, until leaving in the evening, pupils are buzzing with energy and interest. They are proud to be pupils at the school. They show a strong sense of responsibility and actively involve themselves in all aspects of school life, contributing to its ethos. The school is non-competitive, which allows pupils to concentrate on their own targets and achievements rather than comparing themselves with their peers.
- 2.3 Well-informed and highly responsible governance ensures that the school's aims are met. Their arrangements successfully oversee the work of the school providing the management and staff with strong support and challenge. Buildings and grounds are well maintained. Leadership and management are excellent at all levels, providing strong policies and procedures and clear goals, which contribute to the pupils' excellent achievement and ensure the smooth running of the school. The school promotes highly successful links with parents, who responded extremely positively to the pre-inspection questionnaire. They particularly mentioned the quality of teaching, the extra-curricular activities, the pastoral care and the non-competitive ethos of the school, which ensures that their children are not pressurised at an early age. A small number of parents said they did not receive enough information about their children's progress in relation to others in the same class, but inspection evidence does not support this view. The school has successfully addressed the recommendations of the last inspection to clarify the roles of senior management.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that marking includes targeted areas for improvement across all subjects.
2. Make full use of resources in the outside play area in the EYFS.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 Throughout the school the pupils' overall achievement is extremely high, with excellent standards in academic work and in extra-curricular activities. This fulfils the school's aim to encourage every pupil to reach her potential.
- 3.2 Pupils demonstrate an excellent level of knowledge and understanding. Creative abilities, ICT skills and reasoning skills are highly developed. The pupils' ability to interpret and think creatively is apparent throughout the school. This was shown by the animated discussion in an English lesson for older pupils using Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech. They have excellent literacy and numeracy skills and most pupils read avidly, making good use of the well-equipped library. Pupils are extremely articulate and use this skill confidently in discussion and in written work, particularly in poetry. They show a logical approach to science and mathematics and like to try to work out a solution before asking for help. Younger pupils responded with maturity to the challenge to make a five-second timer for a marble run. Presentation of work is of a good and often excellent standard, showing enthusiasm and effort.
- 3.3 Individual and team achievements in extra-curricular activities are excellent and show evidence of hard work and the high quality of teaching and coaching. Pupils have had significant success in mathematics challenges and in drama and music examinations. They are successful at local and regional levels in the many sports played, such as rounders, cross-country running, tennis, cricket and football, as well as achieving success nationally in netball, swimming and gymnastics. Pupils have many opportunities to represent their school. Musicians of all abilities can perform in over thirty ensembles and choirs.
- 3.4 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence available it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations from the EYFS upwards. At the age of eleven most pupils gain entrance with some awards to highly selective senior schools. Awards have also been gained to drama and choir schools. This level of attainment as judged indicates that pupils make exceptional progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.5 Pupils' excellent achievement and exceptional progress is supported by their lively attitudes to learning and their intellectual curiosity as well as their creative and enquiring minds, so evident in many lessons and activities. They contribute to the work of the class as well individually as they do in groups, giving pertinent and well-considered suggestions and answers, as well as showing good levels of concentration and behaviour.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.6 The wide and demanding curriculum is outstanding; together with the excellent extra-curricular activities, it supports the work of the school in meeting its aims and makes a highly positive contribution to the quality of pupils' achievement and personal development. The challenging curriculum offers opportunities for all according to their differing needs and abilities. This is in line with the school's aim to provide an education in its broadest sense. It prepares pupils well for the highly selective senior school examinations taken by all at the age of eleven and covers all the required areas of learning. As well as the national curriculum subjects it includes French, Spanish, Latin, drama and religious education, and has a strong emphasis on citizenship and preparing for the next stage of education. The school has recently been awarded a British Council International School Award 2010. Music, drama and sport are well provided for and support the pupils' personal development. Specialist teaching in some subjects starts in the EYFS and is gradually increased, until in Years 5 and 6 all teaching is by knowledgeable specialist teachers. A full programme of visits and speakers, including residential visits for Years 4, 5 and 6, is included to enrich the curriculum.
- 3.7 The curriculum is extremely well planned to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school. Teachers understand the pupils' individual abilities, and the highly successful system of integral lesson support and enrichment ensures that all pupils, including those with LDD and EAL, as well as those with particular talents, are being taught and challenged according to their ability. These support lessons lead to individual education plans which are shared by all staff, and are included in regular lesson planning. Pupils are challenged to research and discover for themselves, and to take control of their own learning when appropriate.
- 3.8 The wide and stimulating range of extra-curricular opportunities adds much to the pupils' learning and personal development, by widening their interests and helping them to develop self-confidence, and giving challenge. As well as sports, music, art and drama activities, others as diverse as bridge, philosophy and chess are among the many clubs which pupils enjoy. The numerous music groups include 'Cool Clarinets', orchestras and choirs, and all pupils take part in annual plays which are usually linked to aspects of the curriculum.
- 3.9 Strong links with the community include joint events with local primary schools in sports and music, and for pupils with particular talents. Charities both local and national are well supported, and this encourages pupils to think of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. Guest speakers such as a journalist from a national newspaper give talks which broaden the curriculum.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.10 The quality of teaching is excellent and fully supports the aims of the school, particularly that of giving pupils a love of learning which goes beyond the taught curriculum. It makes a strong contribution to the pupils' outstanding progress and achievement. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, all parents agreed teaching helps their child to make progress and many commented on its excellence.
- 3.11 Teachers have high expectations of their pupils who say they are enthused and often inspired by their learning. Teaching enables all pupils to acquire a secure foundation in basic skills as well as increasing their understanding and challenging their intellectual thinking. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and the well-planned lessons enable pupils to make good use of the opportunities provided. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and include a variety of interesting approaches. Support for those with LDD as well as for those with particular talents is of a high quality. Well-directed questioning leading to informed discussion is part of every lesson, and pupils take part and listen to each other as well in Year 1 as they do in Year 6.
- 3.12 Teachers are well qualified and have a love of their subject which they impart confidently to their pupils. They receive strong support from knowledgeable teaching assistants. Excellent resources are used effectively to match the pupils' different learning styles. Since the last inspection the library has been re-positioned and is regularly used for reading and research by all pupils. ICT is well used in lessons, and the trolleys of laptops are easily moved between rooms, allowing teachers to use them freely. On-site games and swimming facilities allow all pupils to benefit from the excellent teaching and coaching.
- 3.13 Marking is regular and helpful. The best marking shows clear targets for improvement as well as being encouraging and supportive. However, the school is aware that this is not yet consistent across all subjects and is working to remedy this. The school has a policy of not giving marks or setting examinations until pupils have reached Year 6. Formal assessment is rigorous, and each pupil's progress is monitored and tracked throughout the school by heads of department and senior managers, who ensure that information is well used to guide planning for all abilities. Self- and peer-assessment allow pupils to analyse their own strengths and weaknesses and to set their own personal targets for development. Standardised tests of attainment help to identify any pupil who may benefit from extra support or challenge.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. In line with the school's aims pupils thrive in a happy, positive atmosphere where the sense of purpose and enthusiasm is tangible. The school's ethos of encouraging all pupils to work towards their own targets in a truly non-competitive way is well liked by both pupils and parents and encourages self-reflection. Pupils say they feel valued and celebrated as individuals. From the EYFS onwards pupils grow in confidence and they take pride in their own and others' achievements.
- 4.2 Pupils develop strong spiritual awareness. They are self-aware and recognise their own strengths and weaknesses, which was shown by their interaction in lively interviews. Their creative displays and their love of music and art, seen for example in paintings by Year 5 pupils of a Book of Hours, show their appreciation of the beauty of the world around them. Assemblies acknowledge and value all faiths. The broad religious education curriculum, which encourages learning about and from a variety of faiths, together with the personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme, gives pupils an insight into values and beliefs and how they affect people's lives. Self-esteem is encouraged by vivid displays in which achievements of all kinds are acknowledged.
- 4.3 The quality of the pupils' moral development is excellent. They distinguish between right and wrong and know that fairness is important. They recognise that high standards of behaviour are expected in lessons and understand that their actions may impinge on the rights and needs of others. However, this is not always apparent in their movement around the school. The initiative to train Year 6 pupils as 'buddy' helpers for the playground, as well as Year 5 pupils' adoption of a friend in Year 3, helps to give a sense of responsibility and pupils say it makes them more aware of the feelings of others.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is outstanding, much helped by the way they are encouraged to see the school as their own community and to recognise their own part in it. Form leaders and the members of the school council meet regularly and contribute to school decision making and respond well to the challenges of leadership. They help to organise charity and social events. The strong citizenship element in the PSHCE scheme of work and its emphasis throughout the curriculum contributes to the pupils' excellent knowledge of public institutions and to the making of future outward-looking citizens. The school has recently been awarded an ecological award recognising pupils' efforts to be as environmentally friendly as possible. They enjoy sharing their facilities and welcoming local children to their school for music, sports coaching and other events.
- 4.5 The pupils' excellent cultural awareness is promoted by its international ethos. French and Spanish days, Africa and India weeks, Egyptian and Mexican workshops and a Japanese visitor as well as performances in art and music all extend the pupils' knowledge of racial and cultural diversity. The school's position in London is well used to visit galleries, museums and theatres and to help pupils appreciate the culture and traditions of their own country.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.6 Excellent pastoral care and rigorously implemented arrangements for the pupils' welfare, health and safety helps the school to achieve its aims to provide a happy, positive atmosphere in which each pupil feels safe and secure. The caring and friendly staff create an atmosphere in which pupils flourish and grow up to be confident and responsible young people ready for the next stage of their education.
- 4.7 Pupils are well known to all staff. Form teachers and Year 6 tutors provide sympathetic and strong support and guidance, both academically and pastorally. Relationships between staff and pupils and the pupils themselves are excellent. In their questionnaire responses and in interviews, pupils praised the help they were given by staff both in and out of class. No parent or pupil raised concerns about bullying and all said that if unacceptable behaviour does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils understand the strong anti-bullying policy and the simple sanctions and rewards system, and feel that they are fair and work well.
- 4.8 Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and effective. All staff have had appropriate child protection training, and the robust policy is well understood and implemented. All necessary measures, including fire drills and staff training, have been taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Risk assessments cover all aspects of school life, and health and safety procedures are thorough. The school has suitable arrangements for pupils who are unwell, and an appropriate number of staff have first aid training. Accidents are properly recorded, as is the administration of medicines. The school is accessible to those who have disabilities, and an ongoing plan shows further improvements. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and many commented on the excellent school food. Physical exercise is taken regularly by all pupils. Admission and attendance registers are properly completed and stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Excellent governance successfully ensures that the school's aims are met, and supports the pupils' high standards of achievement and personal development. The governing body contains professionals with a range of expertise, including parents of former pupils. Governors have a strong strategic vision for the future development of the school, and for financial planning. Effective committees oversee the work of the school, and governors carry through their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety highly effectively. Governors have attended a range of relevant courses to extend their knowledge and expertise. They are well informed about the work of the school through visits and reports from the head and heads of departments. To extend their knowledge and understanding some governors attend school for a morning and track a whole class.
- 5.2 Governors are closely involved with financial and strategic planning. They have been instrumental in providing fine accommodation and the resources necessary to meet the needs of the curriculum.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 The quality of leadership and management is excellent throughout the school. It enables the school fully to achieve its aims to give all pupils challenge and opportunity through an exciting all-round education. The recommendation of the last inspection to clarify the responsibilities of the senior management team (SMT) has been achieved.
- 5.4 The wise and experienced leadership of the head and the strong support of the SMT help to provide clear goals and a strong sense of direction to ensure that all pupils receive the highest quality of education, to equip them for their next schools and future lives. Heads of department manage their departments efficiently and thoroughly monitor the quality of teaching and planning.
- 5.5 The detailed school development plan complements the governors' strategic planning, and together with subject development plans it sets out areas for development and improvement, whilst at the same time showing a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. All the hard-working staff are involved in planning, and the school's clear vision is reflected in the extremely high quality of the pupils' achievement and personal development.
- 5.6 Well-implemented whole-school policies are regularly reviewed and provide guidance to help achieve the school's commitment to the highest standards. Since the last inspection the school has successfully introduced its management of assessment data enabling the pupils' progress to be thoroughly monitored.
- 5.7 The school has effective systems for securing, inducting, and supporting high quality staff who have a range of expertise and experience. The school's recruitment procedures are robust and all staff, volunteers and governors are suitably checked. Good appraisal and in-service training ensures progressive staff development, and all staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The central register of appointments is properly maintained.

- 5.8 The school's sense of community is considerably enhanced by all staff, including those in administration, catering and maintenance, feeling involved in the well-being of the pupils, as well as supporting each other.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.9 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent and fully supports the school's aims. The parents' responses to the questionnaire showed a high level of satisfaction with the education provided. Many consider their daughters fortunate to be at Bute House. They praise all aspects of the school's educational and pastoral provision, particularly endorsing the teaching, curriculum and extra-curricular activities, the pastoral care and the high quality of staff; inspection evidence supports this view.
- 5.10 Parents can attend formal and informal performances, concerts and open mornings, and are able to accompany school trips. They can contact staff by email or personally. The parents' association is an active body which organises social and fund-raising events such as the Christmas fair. All parents are happy with the level of general information they receive and many parents praise the 'back door' of the school website containing displays of work and much information, including regular newsletters. All required information is published to the parents of pupils and prospective pupils. The large digital notice-boards in the entrance hall give topical information such as welcoming pupils with birthdays, results of matches and any changes to the school day.
- 5.11 Parents are given good information regarding their children's progress. A small number of parents felt they did not have enough information about their daughters' achievements in relation to those of the rest of the class. As this is not in line with the school's published aims inspectors felt it was unjustified. Reports to parents are sent twice a year. One is extremely detailed and gives details of personal achievement and guidance on how to improve. The other gives a good mid-year overview of the pupils' progress.
- 5.12 Parents felt their concerns were addressed promptly, normally by the form teacher but also by senior staff, in line with published procedures.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. The small numbers in the setting mean that staff know each child very well, so their individual needs are suitably planned for and met, resulting in every child making excellent progress. Children are safeguarded effectively. Parents are highly supportive of the school as reflected in their response to questionnaires. Careful self-evaluation results in a clear understanding as to how to improve the setting further.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Rigorous implementation of policies and risk assessments result in children being safeguarded effectively. There is a strong working partnership with parents, supported by daily two-way contact through the reading journal, which helps each child to make excellent progress. Excellent links exist with outside agencies. Regular self-assessment, high aspirations and a clear vision enable all staff to form an effective team. All staff actively seek to further their own development through opportunities for training. Thorough assessment and effective application of policies ensures that each child has an equal opportunity to succeed, supported by a wide range of stimulating activities.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. The bright and stimulating environment enables children to learn and to make rapid progress. Access to a wide range of activities covering all the required areas of learning helps the children to develop their imaginations and acquire problem-solving skills. The outside play area is secure and attractive, providing many opportunities for children to develop physically and to play together or on their own using the wide range of resources available, many of which are new. At the time of the inspection, these new resources were not used to their full potential. An excellent balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities, together with thorough assessment and recording, enables an accurate profile to be produced for each child. Parents receive regular information about their children's progress. Children are taught about safety in many contexts and their welfare is a high priority. Regular checks of all equipment both outside and in the room create a safe environment.

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

6.4 The outcomes for children in the EYFS are outstanding. They make excellent progress towards the Early Learning Goals in relation to their varied starting points. They achieve high standards of numeracy and literacy and communicate extremely well. By the end of Reception, children are able to add and subtract as well as to read and write simple sentences. They are able to compare lengths using terms such as 'shorter' and 'longer'. Children develop a strong sense of personal safety, and the fact that they are happy to talk freely to adults is an indication that they feel

safe in the setting. Skills for future life are developed and children are confident and show consideration for others. They develop the awareness that personal hygiene, exercise and healthy eating are needed to achieve a healthy lifestyle.

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.

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/the proprietor/a governors' representative/governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. 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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