



# Connaught House School

Independent School

Inspection report

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**Better  
education  
and care**

DfES Registration Number      213/6129  
Unique Reference Number      101164  
Inspection number              296795  
Inspection dates                11-12 January 2007  
Reporting inspector              Mrs Jane Wotherspoon HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Age group 4-11	Published 6 February 2007	Reference no. 296795
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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Established in 1953, the school has been on its present site on the corner of Connaught Square, near Hyde Park, since 1956. It is based in a Grade II Georgian townhouse with classrooms on five storeys. The school admits children from the age of four, with 74 pupils on roll at present. Boys are prepared for entry into preparatory school at 8+ and girls for common entrance and public school entry at 11 years. The great majority are successful in gaining entry to London day schools.

*The school aims to 'create a happy environment which fosters cheerful, motivated and interested children who have not only confidence in their own abilities but also a considerate awareness of their peers. An emphasis is placed on providing the children with a thorough academic grounding, enabling them to use, realise and enjoy their own individual talents'.*

## Evaluation of the school

Connaught House School is successful in meeting its aims. It provides a good quality education for its pupils, who make good progress to achieve high standards in the basic skills that will serve them well for the next stage of their education. Provision for pupils' personal development is strong in this small school, which promotes a caring family atmosphere. The school complies with nearly all the regulations for independent schools but is constrained by the building and its location. Parental confidence in the school is fully justified.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It covers all areas of experience with strong emphasis on linguistic, mathematical, creative, and aesthetic aspects. As a result, pupils make particularly good progress in these areas of learning. Literacy and numeracy skills are very well developed and pupils reach high standards. Written work is especially high in quality by the time pupils leave the school. Programmes of study for information and communication technology (ICT) are under development: activities are chosen to support other subjects without a coherent approach to developing ICT skills. This is recognised by the school as an area to improve. Opportunities for physical activities are limited by the building, although the school makes appropriate arrangements for pupils to

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exercise. A daily walk and games in the park, and out of school recreational provision compensate for the lack of play space. Effective provision for pupils from Year 3 includes many sports that enable them to develop their physical skills, although younger pupils do not have gymnastics lessons. Pupils in Junior 1 (Reception class) have an appropriate range of activities guided by the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. However, outdoor learning experiences are more limited. The curriculum is extended effectively by the provision of French from Junior 1, together with clubs attended by all pupils, trips to local places of interest and visitors to school, including parents who talk about their professions to older pupils. These add breadth to the curriculum and contribute much to pupils' cultural development. Music tuition from specialist teachers is a strong feature and nearly all pupils learn an instrument. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is a strong element of provision that crosses many subjects and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development, including their awareness of healthy lifestyles.

Teaching is good and is underpinned by teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour, work rate and presentation. Pupils consistently meet these expectations. A thorough system for assessing pupils' progress ensures that teachers know and cater for their needs. Small class sizes mean that teachers are able to give individual help to enable all pupils to make progress. More able pupils are usually challenged effectively, although, just occasionally, more could be expected of them. Lesson planning is effective and teachers choose tasks that are generally stimulating and so add much to pupils' enjoyment of school. Teachers are clear what they want pupils to learn from each lesson and frequently share this information but do not consistently return to, and review, the learning at the end of the lesson. Hence, opportunities for pupils' involvement in assessing their own learning are missed. At times, teachers dominate the talk in lessons and over-direct activities, so reducing pupils' opportunities for active learning and independent working. Teachers have good levels of knowledge and understanding of most subjects but are less confident with using computers. The teaching of writing is particularly successful and covers a wide range of writing formats. Some exemplary marking of pupils' written work, especially that of the older pupils, makes clear what pupils need to do to improve. Art is another strength. Skills are taught in a systematic way that enables pupils to increase their knowledge of a wide range of media and techniques and results in some meticulous work of a high standard. Displays of pupils' art serve to celebrate their efforts as well as to inspire their future work.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and underpins their strong personal development. High rates of attendance are testament to pupils' enjoyment of school. Their very good attitudes to school, encouraged by

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the adults, are exemplified in the pride they take in all that they do. Strong basic skills prepare pupils well for the next school and for later life. Pupils say they enjoy all aspects of school life and really value the friendships they have with others. They support each other effectively, develop good teamwork skills and acquire a strong sense of social responsibility. Pupils are very confident that they have friends to turn to in time of need. *'Everyone cares for each other'*, said one. *'Because you know everyone, you can help them'*, agreed another.

Pupils, especially the older ones, make a good contribution to the school community. They willingly take on responsibilities as monitors to help the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Older girls help younger pupils, especially at lunchtimes. Beyond the school, pupils have entertained the elderly and raised money for various charities. The oldest pupils are very mature and sensible, self-confident and articulate without being brash. The school has no formal means of seeking pupils' views of the school or gathering their ideas about how it could improve. In consequence, pupils are not as involved in decision making as they could be. Pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence are fostered effectively through opportunities to perform in plays and recitals of poetry and music. Pupils gain a satisfactory awareness of a range of cultures through the curriculum and celebrations of festivals. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils' strong social and moral awareness, clear understanding of right and wrong, and ability to take responsibility for themselves and others are founded on the extremely positive way they are managed by staff. Such an approach is fundamental to the school's philosophy.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Policies are implemented effectively through good practice. The ethos of care is underpinned by strong relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. Policies for maintaining discipline are appropriate and emphasise positive elements. Excellent behaviour is the norm and so pupils feel safe. Bullying is almost unheard of. Pupils are confident that they can sort out small disagreements for themselves, and although even these are rare, they know that adults will help if necessary. Healthy lunches are served and pupils are encouraged to try different vegetables. However, the biscuit at break time is not such a healthy option.

A good range of risk assessments, carried out regularly, including on the premises, in relation to fire, and on activities and trips out of school, ensure that pupils learn in safe and secure surroundings. Staff are very alert to possible issues on the daily walk to Hyde Park and pupils are supervised carefully as they move up and down the stairs. The school has not devised an accessibility plan to show how it might take account of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002). First Aid cover is adequate and all accidents and

incidents are recorded thoroughly. All staff have received basic training in safeguarding pupils but the designated member of staff who oversees child protection issues has not had enhanced training for this role. The school has acted speedily to rectify this deficiency and appropriate training has been arranged for the very near future.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The proprietor undertakes a range of checks, including clearance with the Criminal Records Bureau, to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. However, recruitment procedures do not include checking staff's medical fitness before confirming their appointment.

### School's premises and accommodation

Although adequate overall, the school's premises inhibit some activities. The principal and staff do what they can to alleviate restrictions by using Hyde Park for daily games and play as well as out of school facilities for physical education. The building is light, airy and well maintained. Rooms are adequate in size for the numbers of pupils. However, there is no designated facility for pupils who are ill and insufficient separate toilets for older pupils.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school's prospectus, which is also on the website, is colourful, informative and meets most requirements. A new prospectus is in progress and will rectify the current omissions, which relate to details concerning the proprietor and school policies on admissions, discipline and exclusions. A booklet issued to parents when their children start school covers many practical details and useful information about the curriculum. Regular memoranda keep parents up-to-date with changes. Twice yearly reports to parents give good information on the progress their children are making but are not always clear about areas for improvement. Parents are positive about the school and the vast majority are highly satisfied with what it offers their children.

### Procedures for handling complaints

The school has recently updated its procedures to comply fully with regulations and intends to re-issue these to all parents. In practice, an open-door policy means that parents are able to raise concerns informally that are resolved quickly without the use of formal procedures.

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## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- comply fully with guidance to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by ensuring that the member of staff designated to take responsibility for child protection issues has enhanced training for this role (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff confirm their medical fitness (paragraph 4(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide sufficient washrooms for the number and ages of pupils (paragraph 5(k)) and appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l)) in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the address and telephone number of the proprietors' registered office (paragraph 6(2)(b)) and of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e)) to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils.

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- increase the use of computers and develop pupils' ICT skills within a structured framework
- involve pupils in evaluating their own work and the progress they make
- provide formal opportunities for pupils to give their views of the school and to participate in decision making.

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## School details

Name of school	Connaught House School		
DfES number	213/6129		
Unique reference number	101164		
Type of school	Boys' pre-preparatory/Girls' preparatory		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1953		
Age range of pupils	4-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 20	Girls: 54	Total: 74
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,950 - £11,100		
Address of school	Connaught House School 47 Connaught Square London W2 2HL		
Telephone number	020 7262 8830		
Fax number	020 7262 0781		
Email address	connaughthouse@btconnect.com		
Principal	Mrs J Hampton		
Proprietor	Connaught House Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Mrs Jane Wotherspoon HMI		
Dates of inspection	11-12 January 2007		