

Inspection of Sandwell School, 1920

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BOARD OF EDUCATION. MIDDLESEX.

Report of Inspection of Sandwell School, Woodside Park, Finchley, held on 10th and 11th March, 1920.

Inspectors.

Miss N. A. OUTRAM.

Mrs. M. WITHIEL, H.M.I.

Organisation, etc.

1. HEAD MISTRESS:-MISS A. A. M. SEMPLE.
2. NUMBER OF ASSISTANT STAFF .-10: Regular, 4; Occasional, 6.
3. FEES (YEARLY):-**Tuition:** Morning Pupils (under 10 years of age), 9l. 9s. ; others under 10 years of age, 12l. 12s. ; under 13 years of age, 15l. 15s. ; 13 years of age and over, 18l. 18s. ; Stationery, 18s. ; Games subscription, 15s. **Boarding:** Under 10 years of age, 50l. 8s. ; under 13 years of age, 63l. ; 13 years of age and over, 75l. 12s. ; Laundry, 4l. 14s. 6d. to 6l. 6s. **Extra Subject Fees:** Violin, 6l. 6s. to 12l. 12s. ; Piano, 6l. 6s. to 9l. 6s. ; Drawing and Painting, 6l. 6s. to 9l. 9s. ; Elocution, 3l. 3s. to 6l. 6s. ; Singing, 9l. 9s. ; Dancing (per term), 1l. 11s. 6d.
4. TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS in each of the last 3 Years:-

1917.

	Boys.	Girls.
Boarders		3
Day Scholars	10	72
Total	10	75

1918.

	Boys.	Girls.
Boarders		2
Day Scholars	10	57
Total	10	59

1919.

	Boys.	Girls.
Boarders		2
Day Scholars	10	52
Total	10	54

Statistics of Pupils.

5. ACTUAL FIGURES at date of Inspection:-

(a) Total Number of Pupils, 64.

(b) Distribution of Boarders and Day Scholars:-

	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Boarders	2	2	
Day Scholars	10	52	62

c) Distribution of Pupils according to their age on 31 July 1919, and sex:-

	Boys.	Girls.
Under 9	9	24
9 and under 10	1	2
10 " " 11		2
11 " " 12		7
12 " " 13		6
13 and under 14		6
14 " " 15		4
15 " " 16		1
16 " " 17		2

(d) Distribution of Pupils according to Forms (beginning at the lowest):-

Form.	Average Age	Number
Transition	6y 4m	7
I	7 6	10
II	8 11	20
III	11 6	14
IV	14 2	13

6. AREAS from which Pupils are drawn:- Finchley and neighbourhood - 100 per cent.

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NATURE AND SCOPE OF SCHOOL.

This is a Private School for girls and boys which has been carried on in the same house for the last twenty years. It is for the great majority of its pupils a Preparatory School, and it is said that there has been of late years a marked increase in the number of younger children, and at the same time a falling off in the number of older girls. The fact remains, however, that at present the scope of the school is ill-defined. About half the pupils are under 9 years of age, but there are also seven girls over 14, three of whom are nearly 17 years of age.

The number of pupils is now 64, the same as last year, a few less than in the preceding two years. Ten of the pupils are boys, all but one under 9 years of age. As a rule boys leave for boys' Preparatory Schools on reaching 9 years; many go to Highgate School. Girls are said to remain generally till 12 or 13 before going on, usually to Boarding Schools, or in some cases to a Private School at Harrow. The ages of the girls now in the School seem to suggest, however, that girls also frequently leave at about 9 or 10 years.

Including boys, 51 per cent. of the School were under 9 years, 19 per cent. between 9 and 13, 19 per cent. between 12 and 14, and 11 per cent. between 14 and 17 on the 31st July last. All pupils are drawn from the immediate neighbourhood.

FINANCE. The income of the School depends wholly on fees.

PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT.

The premises consist of a house, the older portion of which is said to have been formerly a shooting box. About 70 years ago good rooms on ground and first floor were added to the older block of three floors. The Head Mistress some few years since put up a good iron room for a hall-gymnasium and classroom, connecting it with the house by a glass-roofed passage which could be used for growing nature study specimens.

There are four adequate classrooms for the five Forms. Form I either shares the hall with Form II or the Transition room. Forms III and IV have classrooms on the first floor, where desks are too close together to allow the teacher to reach every pupil. It would no doubt be possible to transpose the present library with one or other of these rooms, and if numbers increase this expedient should be adopted.

Cloakrooms are in the older part of the house and are rather dark, but are not unsatisfactory. The provision of lavatory basins and offices (7 basins and 5 offices) is quite adequate.

Arrangements for the three resident Mistresses and two boarders appear satisfactory. Two Mistresses share a bedroom, but use a small dressing room also. The two bathrooms and lavatories on the first floor are adequate. There are two stairs to the first floor, but only one to the second, where there are three bedrooms.

There is a good fiction library open to the girls and a good collection of general literature. Wall maps are said to exist, but were not in evidence in either History or Geography lessons.

Decorative repair is not good; no doubt the war has caused great difficulties.

The garden is charming, consisting of three lawns separated by groups of beautiful trees. Two of the lawns provide tennis and net-ball courts respectively, and there would be space also for a little experimental gardening in connection with nature study.

The School house is situated in the midst of streets of small villa residences some of which are now in process of construction. It serves conveniently the needs of the younger children of the neighbourhood.

STAFF.

The Head Mistress has had considerable experience both as teacher and Mistress. At present the varied claims on her time made by her household and school prevent her from doing much teaching, but she takes all the Latin and some of the English work.

There are at present four Assistant Mistresses on the regular staff, but one of these does not attend on three afternoons a week. Two of these Mistresses and also the junior Music Mistress are resident. There are five Visiting Mistresses - for music(2), Drawing, Elocution, and Dancing.

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The staff, including the Head Mistress, is numerically adequate for the present organisation, but if the older section of Form IV is retained, it should be taught apart, and hence would necessitate an increase in staff. The three senior members appear adequately qualified for the work they undertake, and the work of the recently appointed junior Mistress shows promise, especially in arithmetic and handwork. Salaries are not high, and the French Mistress is certainly receiving less than she could command in a full-time post elsewhere.

CURRICULUM AND ORGANISATION.

The Curriculum includes English, History and Geography, French and Latin, Mathematics and Nature Study, together with Drawing, Singing, Handwork and Physical Exercises. There are five classes, of which the youngest, the Transition, ranges in age from 5 to 7 years, so that some pupils are only beginning to read and

write. Form IV, the highest class, has a large age range, from 11 to 16 years and are of course a very difficult class to work together. It has not been found possible to arrange separate instruction for the older girls, yet their presence in the same class as girls of 12 and 13 is disadvantageous to themselves and to the younger girls. The standard required is too low to necessitate their exerting themselves and their attitude towards their work has a bad influence on their juniors, while the teaching hours, already short, are reduced in some subjects by the alternate teaching of the two sets. The English and History teaching is conducted on satisfactory lines for the most part. English is taught by all members of the staff, and is intelligently handled. Attention is paid to all branches and the standard attained in the different Forms is often good. The written work of Form IV in both English and History would be satisfactory, if judged for the half of the Form who are under 14 years, but the other half should be doing better work. The teaching of formal grammar is in certain respects out-of-date, but quite satisfactory work is being done in sentence construction including training in the correct use of words. History is taught in four Forms by the same Mistress throughout. The scheme is suitable, the methods of teaching such as to interest and impart definite knowledge, while even in Form II a small amount of independent written work is successfully achieved. Geography is in the hands of two Mistresses, and the work of the lower Forms is well planned. In the case of Forms III and IV the course includes not only descriptive work which is well done, but the study of the development of the earth and its inhabitants and the place occupied by the earth in the universe, quite beyond the grasp of these children. Insufficient use is made of wall maps and pictures. French is taught in the three upper Forms by a Mistress who has resided abroad and has good command of the language. She is moreover a sympathetic and vigorous teacher. In the highest Form the standard in oral and written work is well up to that reached elsewhere by girls of 13 years, although, as in the case of English, not satisfactory for girls of 15. Latin is begun only in Form IV, but there are, as in French, two sets, so that the nominal time assigned does not correspond with the actual periods of instruction received by either set. The aim of the teaching is to impart a knowledge of accident and of a few elementary notions of syntax by reading easy stories in Division II, and Caesar in Division I, and incidentally to direct attention to Latin roots of English words. The girls appear interested and are gaining some facility in translation. The syllabus in Arithmetic is on the whole well planned and up to a point may be said to be carried out successfully. More ground could be covered in the two higher Forms if the teaching were less discursive. Geometry is taken in these Forms with one three-quarter hour period weekly, but here also better results could be achieved if in the teaching more regard were paid to the need gradually to develop the pupils' powers of independent thought. In Form III, in particular, less time should be spent on practical work unconnected with the real course of study. In Algebra the standard now reached is not high. The only form of Science taught is Nature Study, to which one weekly period is allotted. It is taught throughout by one Mistress. The course treats of plant life in the lower Forms, in Forms III and IV it deals almost entirely with animal life and is throughout too theoretical. Forms III and IV might at least be doing good experimental work in the garden and greenhouse. Games and Drill are taken by a well-qualified Mistress, who is a very competent teacher. The gymnastic course is well graded, carefully adapted to the powers of the pupil, and the work in free and apparatus exercises was well done. Class singing is also carefully taught by both the responsible Visiting Mistress and her junior. The

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teaching is in touch with modern methods, and affords good training. Handwork is taken in the three lower Forms by a Mistress who has recently joined the staff. The work already in process is of satisfactory character, and Form II should soon be able to add drawing to scale in planning their work. Drawing is taught throughout partly by a Visiting Mistress. Very creditable colour studies of plants and flowers were seen, as also imaginative work and design. Needlework is represented at the moment by wool crocheting.

GENERAL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND CORPORATE LIFE.

There is a daily assembly held before morning school for a short service of hymns and prayers. Out of school activities are largely centred on games, for which the facilities are here very good. Moreover the gymnastic Mistress takes the keenest interest in both net-ball and tennis and gives the children excellent training. An attempt is being made to support a Girl Guides Corps; this would be of doubtful service except for the 6-7 older girls.

There is no medical inspection, but the gymnastic Mistress has been able under medical advice to give most valuable remedial treatment to individuals. The welfare of the pupils is undoubtedly carefully considered. A good mid-day meal is provided for the 12-15 children who need to stay at school.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

The School may fairly claim to give a satisfactory preparatory course for boys up to the age of 9, and to girls up to 12-13 years. For the boys it would rank as preparatory to the ordinary "Preparatory School," but for a section of the girls it would appear to give a course preparatory to that of the ordinary Secondary School. There is, however, a section, forming about one half of the highest Form, who are of full Secondary School age, although the work they are doing is not of standard appropriate to their years.

For the use of the Office
and Inspectorate only.

Page 1

MIDDLESEX

FINCHLEY, WOODSIDE PARK, SANDWELL SCHOOL

REMARKS enclosed by the Inspector in square brackets - not for inclusion in issued Report.

FINANCE

The H.M. stated that the school was working at a small profit, but that with present salaries the profit was very small. She gave no figures, and judging from the way in which school lists and other statistics are kept, it is possible that clear accounts are not available, nor a yearly approximate balance sheet. Indeed it may be that the school does not pay its way. The H.M. said she was obliged to take in foreign girls as boarders. She has had for some time a friend living with her who occupies two rooms, and two Dutch girls and one Swiss are here to improve their English and to see London. These girls use as their sitting room the library which would be a good ground floor classroom. Moreover since September a crippled invalid cousin of the H.M.'s has come to live with her, and uses as her room the former dining room, also a good ground floor room. The H.M. stated that she made a small profit from the foreign girls' fees, 63/- weekly, and would like to increase their number. The two girl boarders in school attendance are relatives of the H.M. The Lodge, once used as a sanatorium, is now let as a dwelling house.

The possibility of raising fees was mentioned, but the H.M. was clear that this was impossible. The surrounding district consists of streets of small villa houses, whose occupants would need a school close at hand for their small children, but probably would send them to public schools as soon as they can manage the journey.

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Another serious question is the tenure of the house for which the present lease of 14 years runs out in 1921. The H.M. expects to be able to renew, but at an increased rent. Building is now going on all around, but the new roads seem to leave this old house with its beautiful trees untouched. The existence of the open space would add much to the local amenity. The H.M. says that no house in the immediate neighbourhood is large enough for a school. The house badly needs repair inside and out.

STAFF

The H.M. holds a C.H.L. Hon. Cert. She is a woman between 50 and 60 years of age, who seems to possess but small organising ability and to have had little, if any, good school experience. She is interested in her teaching and was glad to receive suggestions, and appears painstaking, but is quite obviously growing very tired - she desires to do even less teaching than now. It was pointed out that the Board would certainly take into consideration the stability of a school as affected by finance and housing conditions, but she has no plans as to what she shall do if her lease is not renewed, and how she will meet the increase of rent which she anticipates, except by taking in more foreign girl boarders. She appears to have asked for recognition with a view of increasing the prestige of the school, but raised the question of Teachers' Superannuation conditions. She is probably right in thinking that a school for small children will be needed here, but that fees cannot be raised beyond the present scale.

The little daughter of the French Mistress is a pupil in the school, and this Mistress does not begin work till 10 a.m.

Page 3.

The resident Mistresses are given laundry expenses in addition to board and lodging, which together, may be estimated as worth £70 - £75. The salaries paid therefore reach £165, £130 and £118 - not unduly low for the qualifications offered in the case of the two juniors.

28 MAY. 1920

COPY.

Finchley, Woodside Park, Sandwell School. S.C. 152/20.

Madam,

I am directed to enclose for your information the Report of the Inspectors of the Board of Education on the above-named School. The Report if published must be published in its entirety.

The Board regret that they are unable at present to place the school on the list of Secondary or Preparatory Schools recognised by them under Article 52 of the Regulations as efficient, in the category either of a secondary or a Preparatory School, owing to two reasons. The school cannot be recognised as a Secondary School since the work of the elder girls does not reach the necessary standard; nor can it be recognised as a Preparatory School since the failure to attain the necessary standard in the higher classes affects adversely the character of the work in the classes below.

The Board would, however, be prepared to reconsider the question of recognition if, and when, either the elder girls have been excluded, or satisfactory steps have been taken to remove the adverse effect referred to.

I am, Madam,
your obedient Servant,
R.P.SCOTT.

Miss A.A.M. Semple,
The Court House,
Woodside Park,
N.

28 MAY.1929

COPY.

Finchley, Woodside Park, Sandwell School.
S.C. 152/20.

Sir,

Herewith is sent for the information of the Local Education Authority a Form (415a.S.) containing a statement drawn up in the result of a Full Inspection of the above-named School held on the 10th and 11th March, 1920.

The information contained in the Form is not intended for publication, and the Board will expect that it shall be treated both as regards the use of it, and the persons who have access to it, in such a way as to ensure that it shall not be published either as a whole or in extracts.

In the result of the Inspection the Board find that owing to the lack of definition of the scope of the School, they are unable at present to recognise the School under Chapter IX of the Regulations for Secondary Schools.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

R.P. SCOTT.

To the
Local Education Authority,
Middlesex.