

Inspection of Heathside Preparatory School

16 New End, Hampstead, London NW3 1JA

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 January 2022

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |
| Does the school meet the independent school standards? | Yes |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to school because their lessons are fun and learning is exciting. Teachers and staff treat pupils with great kindness and respect. Pupils trust their teachers to help them learn, keep them safe and send them on their way to the next stage of their education. That trust is well placed. Pupils are extremely well cared for and nurtured. Pupils new to the school are warmly welcomed and settle in quickly.

Pupils are consistently well behaved. Lessons are rarely interrupted by silliness, enabling teachers to focus on learning. Bullying is extremely rare. Relationships are very positive. Pupils hold their teachers in high esteem and know that they will resolve any concerns they may have quickly and fairly. The balance between strict rules and a relaxed atmosphere is just right. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and absorb learning with a sense of awe. As a result, pupils achieve highly and move to schools of their choice.

Pupils' respect for others is strong. They enjoy the work they do in their personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. Older pupils appreciate the careers programme and how it helps them to think about their future. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility around the school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders' work to improve the school has been highly successful. Following the change of proprietor and the appointment of the current headteacher, leaders have acted decisively. They have put past failings behind them and built a well-organised school that has pupils' learning as its focus. Policies, routines and high expectations are now firmly established. Provision for careers education, relationships and sex education, and health education meet requirements, as do the arrangements to comply with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Not only are all the independent school standards met consistently, but pupils receive a high-quality education.

The well-planned curriculum aims to ensure that pupils build and deepen their learning. In Years 1 to 6, leaders have adopted a scheme that they have adapted appropriately to meet the needs of their pupils. Learning is organised into different themes. Leaders have thought carefully about how pupils' knowledge in each subject develops sequentially over time. However, there are some inconsistencies in how different subjects are taught. Sometimes, teachers find it difficult to get to the heart of what matters. This affects how well pupils learn and remember the most important subject content.

Subject training for teachers has not received as much attention as developing leadership capacity. Leaders and governors know that subject training is now a priority.

In Years 7 to 9, pupils build on their previous learning and deepen their knowledge and skills well. For example, in biology in Year 7, teachers build on previous work on

plants to introduce the structure of cells. This learning is developed further in Year 9, when pupils learn about complex cell structures. Teachers are careful to ensure that they repeat important concepts so that pupils can recall facts and ideas instinctively. As a result, pupils are able to draw conclusions and apply their learning to other situations.

Teachers are knowledgeable about how to teach. They use assessment to identify any gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers use different approaches to spark pupils' interest. For example, teachers dress up as characters of the story they are reading or get pupils to guess what an object is in a bag. Higher up the school, teachers encourage pupils to discuss their ideas and encourage them to ask questions.

The school's approach to early reading is effective. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get a strong start and are introduced to simple books and writing early on. A phonics programme is used effectively with children in Reception and in Year 1. Pupils learn the sounds that letters represent and put these together confidently to read words. Staff ensure that the books pupils read match the sounds they are learning in their phonics lessons. Nearly all pupils are confident readers by the end of Year 1. Staff provide individual support to those pupils who still need help in Year 2.

Leaders and staff do much to give pupils an experience that is broader than just the academic. Pupils enjoy visits to theatres and places of interest such as Hampton Court a great deal. Many attend the school's after-school clubs, which range from chess to science. These activities aim to broaden and deepen pupils' learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders ensure that pupils' individual needs are carefully identified. Staff provide these pupils with the help they need. All pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' efforts to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for are highly successful. A thorough overhaul of the systems and procedures for safeguarding means that there are robust checks on the suitability of staff. Pupils said that they 'definitely' feel safe. Inspectors confirm that the school is a safe and caring environment for pupils.

Regular training for staff helps to ensure that they know about the most recent guidance and the signs that a pupil may be worried about something. The new online system for staff to report concerns is proving effective. Record-keeping is thorough. Strong links with external agencies, such as the local authority, mean that leaders are able to arrange appropriate support quickly.

The school's safeguarding policy is published on its website. It is updated regularly to take account of current government guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The curriculum has improved rapidly over the past two years, thanks to the efforts of all staff. Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should be taught in each subject and theme. However, there are some inconsistencies in how different subjects are taught. Sometimes, teachers do not ensure that pupils are taught the most important subject content in a logical order. Leaders and governors should ensure that everyone has a common understanding of the curriculum and how it translates into a sequenced teaching programme. This work should include subject-specific training, which leaders and governors have already identified as a priority.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 100078 |
| DfE registration number | 202/6360 |
| Local authority | Camden |
| Inspection number | 10216678 |
| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 223 |
| Proprietor | Dukes Education |
| Chair | Aatif Hassan |
| Headteacher | Katherine Vintiner |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £15,183 to £19,392 |
| Telephone number | 0203 058 4011 |
| Website | www.heathsideschoolhampstead.com |
| Email address | info@heathsideprep.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 19 to 21 March 2019 |

Information about this school

- Heathside Preparatory School is an independent school that is located in the London Borough of Camden.
- The previous standard inspection was carried out from 19 to 21 March 2019 and judged that the school required improvement.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils about school life. They also spoke with the chair of the proprietor body, the managing director, the headteacher and senior leaders.
- There were 117 responses to Ofsted Parent View and 114 written comments from parents and carers. There were 43 responses to the online staff survey and none to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, PSHE, early reading, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of the inspection, including geography and the thematic curriculum in Years 1 to 6.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including curriculum plans. They also looked at safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of behaviour and attendance, and other information provided by school leaders.
- Inspectors toured the school sites and looked at a range of documentation to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Alice Clay

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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