



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Heath House Preparatory School

May 2022

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School's Details

School	Heath House Preparatory School			
DfE number	209/6294			
Address	Heath House School 37 Wemyss Road London SE3 0TG			
Telephone number	020 8297 1900			
Email address	info@heathhouseprepschool.com			
Headteacher	Mrs Sophia Laslett			
Proprietors	Mrs Sophia and Mr Ian Laslett			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	115			
	EYFS	27	Juniors	88
Inspection dates	17 – 20 May 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Heath House Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school, situated in Blackheath Village, South East London. The school is accommodated in three different buildings within very close proximity and comprises three sections: Early Years for Kindergarten and Reception pupils, Pre-Prep for Years 1 and 2, and Prep for pupils in Years 3 to 6. It was founded in 1993 by the current proprietors, the headteacher and her husband, who take responsibility for the school's financial and administrative management. The head and two family members comprise the leadership team.
- 1.2 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school strives to instil British values alongside its own values of resilience, kindness, good manners, responsibility, sportsmanship, respect, individual confidence and tolerance. The school seeks to ensure that every child achieves their academic potential and tries their very best whilst at the same time enjoying their learning.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils are mostly from families who live in the surrounding area with business and professional backgrounds. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in the school is above average. The curriculum is modified for all children through the provision of individual education plans, reflecting the child's potential, ability or talent across one or more subjects. Additional support or extension is given to all pupils to suit their individual needs. No pupils in the school have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or speak English as an additional language (EAL).

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#)

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils' exemplary attitudes enable them to become highly effective learners.
- Pupils are highly skilled in literacy; they are articulate and read with eloquence and understanding.
- Pupils achieve an extremely high level in mathematics.
- Pupils' creative skills in music and art are less well developed.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils exhibit outstanding confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils treat each other with considerable kindness and respect and the quality of relationships between pupils and adults is excellent.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of co-operation in their shared learning.
- Pupils are compassionate and they develop strong links with their local community.

Recommendation

3.3 The school should make the following improvement:

- Enable pupils to extend their creative skills in music and art.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

3.5 Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning which enabled them to work successfully during lockdown and maintain their high standards. From the EYFS, pupils thrive through a learning approach which encourages them to develop initiative and independence. Pupils of all ages are engaged and enthusiastic during lessons. They settle down to studies quickly, they work with diligence and collaborate most effectively. They are curious in their approach to developing knowledge and many independently seek opportunities to extend their learning, such as when pupils followed up on an interest in bees by contacting Blackheath station to seek permission to build a bee hotel on their land. Older pupils are adept at accessing a wide range of sources, especially through the internet, and can synthesise these to produce sophisticated pieces of independent research.

- 3.6 Pupils achieve excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across the key areas of learning, as indicated by the evidence from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work. This evidence, together with standardised measures of progress in mathematics and English, shows that pupils make rapid progress over time. Their high levels of achievement can be attributed to the significant impact of the leadership team who regularly observe and mentor staff in order to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met, and the use of tracking data to plan and implement effective and highly personalised interventions to ensure excellent outcomes for all pupils. In this way pupils requiring extra support, as well as those who are more able, achieve their potential which successfully fulfils the school's aim.
- 3.7 Strong skills and understanding in the core subjects are established in the EYFS, and as pupils progress through the school they display a highly-developed fund of knowledge. Their understanding is facilitated by extremely challenging teaching and careful planning to provide a range of stimulating activities. From an early age, pupils listen most attentively in class and use their developing skills to investigate, solve problems and think creatively. For example, pupils showed strong initiative and creativity as they attempted to find suitable vocabulary to describe an object without using its actual name. Older pupils show secure knowledge in science of how electrical circuits function and what will happen if more cells or bulbs are added and younger pupils can sequence accurately the lifecycle of a frog. Good standards in French, Spanish and Mandarin were evidenced through work scrutiny, and in discussions pupils expressed confidence in their progress in using these languages. Pupils develop high-level skills in sport through regular games afternoons on the adjacent heath and through use of external facilities for climbing, cycling, and swimming. Pupils express imagination and individuality through the many opportunities they are given to present exciting gymnastics and dance displays. They exhibit some good skills in art, as evidenced by the colourful art displays around the school based on the styles of Gaudi and Picasso. Pupils gain appropriate musical experience through singing and learning rhythms on percussion. However, their creative skills are limited by the lack of opportunities for them to develop the richness and joy of being involved in, and appreciating, a breadth of music and art.
- 3.8 Pupils are highly literate, supported well by staff who are aware of their individual needs. In the EYFS children demonstrate strong phonic knowledge and by the end of their time in the setting many are already reading simple stories and writing in short sentences. As they progress through the school pupils read expressively and with understanding and are noticeably articulate when performing to an audience, as was observed in an assembly where older pupils performed confidently and eloquently to their parents. Pupils develop excellent writing skills and they are able to include their highly descriptive vocabulary in a range of genres. Year 1 pupils use synonyms effectively and Year 6 pupils make excellent use of personification, metaphors and similes. Pupils of all ages are inspired by poetry, with younger pupils bringing humour and excitement into their poems based on *My Big Mouth* by Steven Camden. Older pupils produced emotive poetry based on their lockdown experiences, sensitively exploring their feelings of loneliness and isolation. All pupils benefit from effective and consistent marking including the correction of key spellings and this enables them to improve their English skills even further.
- 3.9 Pupils have a good understanding of information and communications technology (ICT) which they report they were able to improve during lockdown. As they progress through the school, they become confident in the use of word processing, spreadsheets and coding as a result of discrete ICT lessons and they can develop these skills further in the after-school technology club. Pupils benefit from the use of a suite of tablet computers which they use competently for classwork and research. In the EYFS children can draw shapes such as squares, triangles and circles using the interactive whiteboard. Pupils of all ages use their proficiency in ICT to research many tasks. For example, the younger ones produced accurate fact files of sea creatures and older pupils skilfully researched their favourite county within the United Kingdom. Pupils in Year 6 make good use of tablet computers to capture images for the termly publication which they independently upload to the school's online platform.

- 3.10 Pupils achieve an extremely high level in mathematics. They clearly enjoy this subject and are well supported by their teachers. By the end of EYFS most children can count to 100, solve problems including doubling and halving and use estimation effectively. As they move up through the school pupils confidently apply logical and mathematical understanding to a range of subjects. Their calculations are neatly laid out and accurate, involving both numeracy and graphical representation. Older pupils use grid references when reading maps in geography and in personal social and health education (PSHE) younger pupils gather facts about shoe size and age which they then present in graphical form. When inspired by Marcus Rashford's free school meal campaign, older pupils exhibited competent weighing skills when analysing the school's food waste over a week. Pupils' effective strategies for recalling prior learning were put to good use in Year 3 as they confidently and accurately converted improper fractions into mixed numbers. Pupils' excellent understanding of mathematical processes is enhanced by opportunities to take part in online mathematics challenges.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve a good level of success in a range of academic and other achievements. Pupils achieve a high level of success in inter-school competitions, with the under-9 football team winning and the under-10 football team taking second place in recent tournaments. Individual pupils compete at national level in diving and at county level in gymnastics and football. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to perform to audiences and those who work towards speech and drama awards achieve excellent results. Pupils perform extremely well in the junior mathematics challenge, with 12 children achieving gold awards in 2021. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a few parents disagreed that there was a suitable range of extra-curricular activities, but pupils spoke enthusiastically about the range of extra-curricular clubs on offer such as chess, photography, science and computing.
- 3.12 Pupils of all ages develop very strong study skills which they apply successfully to all areas of the curriculum. Children in the EYFS develop keen observation and questioning skills as they explore the wide range of activities provided within the setting. Young children thought critically as they answered inference questions about why they should cover their plant pots with mesh, and in many lessons, as a matter of course, older pupils made predictions before forming any conclusion. Pupils demonstrate effective research skills through challenges in history and geography where they work independently and in groups to gather pertinent facts to present to their peers. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaires reported that the school equips their child with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils show outstanding confidence and self-esteem because of a challenging curriculum that is implemented successfully by school leaders. Pupils benefit from the school's initiative to furnish them with the eight core values which are woven into every lesson and activity. They show significant self-belief because they are not afraid to make mistakes and they are encouraged and praised when using initiative. Their emotional well-being is supported most effectively through regular PSHE lessons, assemblies, academic lessons and extra-curricular activities. Older pupils report that they are encouraged to measure and improve their own learning and performance, with time set aside for reflection. Pupils are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning through the use of a traffic light system which helps them to understand what they need to do to make improvements and to progress. Pupils' excellent personal development skills are fostered through exciting residential visits to Scotland and Sussex, the latter offering a demanding outdoor pursuits programme which challenges pupils to become more courageous and resilient. Pupils leaving the school are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their lives both academically and in their personal development.
- 3.15 Pupils demonstrate an extremely well-developed moral understanding and sense of right and wrong, because the ethos of the school embraces and positively promotes fundamental British values, standards and rules. This in turn translates into the pupils' understanding of respect. They gain a useful

insight into the work of public services and systems of the law through visits from local members of parliament, the fire brigade and local police. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and in social situations is exemplary. They treat each other with considerable kindness and respect and the quality of relationships between pupils and adults is excellent. Pupils report that they enjoy receiving plus points, stars for their school values charts and positive notes in their journal to reward their good behaviour. They also praised the school's approach to encouraging them to reflect on their behaviour rather than simply applying sanctions. In the questionnaires, all pupils who responded reported that the school expects them to behave well and that the school takes bullying seriously.

- 3.16 Pupils show a strong understanding of the need to stay healthy and safe. They embrace readily the many opportunities for physical exercise available to them. Pupils spoke confidently about the rules that keep them safe when on the heath and they appreciate broader safety rules as they take part in activities such as climbing and cycling. Pupils are confident that they understand what constitutes a healthy diet, which was confirmed by the children in the EYFS as they discussed and prepared a fresh fruit salad. They all knew to wash their hands before starting this activity. Older pupils report that teaching ensures that they understand the dangers of using the internet and social media. All staff who responded to the questionnaires agreed that clear guidance regarding online safety is provided. Throughout the period of lockdown and beyond, pupils' mental health has remained robust due to strong pastoral support from the school. In a PSHE lesson, older pupils exhibited a mature understanding of how they could deal with any worries and they were comfortable to share concerns openly within the group.
- 3.17 Pupils are socially aware and so are able to work extremely effectively with others to solve problems and work towards common goals. Children in the EYFS move around their setting calmly, sharing resources and helping each other. Older pupils enjoy working with those lower down the school through reading with children in the EYFS, and encouraging them to be confident when delivering their assemblies to their parents. Pupils benefit from further collaborative opportunities such as through the very many teambuilding activities available on residential trips and in group activities in physical education. For example, pupils learn to work together and support each other during their climbing sessions where they monitor the ropes and encourage and support the climber so that they may all climb safely. In all group work observed pupils listened to each other and demonstrated good skills of negotiation and compromise, articulating their opinions with confidence and balanced reasoning. Across the school pupils exhibit high levels of co-operation in their shared learning. For example, older pupils collaborated successfully in dodgeball and football and younger children shared out modelling clay accurately and respectfully so that each member of the group had an equal amount.
- 3.18 Pupils are compassionate and enjoy the development of strong links with the local community. They foster warm relationships with the residents and recent activities have included litter picking in the neighbourhood, sharing their Chinese dragon procession on the heath and, on one occasion, simply walking into the village to wish those living nearby a good morning. They show kindness when entertaining elderly residents of a local care home with songs and laughter. The oldest pupils exhibit their care for others by independently selecting a range of charities and deciding how to raise funds, whether it be through cake sales or non-uniform days. Recent contributions have been made to the NSPCC and London Air Ambulance as well as for the local foodbank in Lewisham. During the inspection pupils chose to dress in red and white to support the charity 'Crisis', following a visual presentation in assembly led by a pupil who had researched homelessness. Older pupils demonstrate responsibility by taking on such roles as prefects or school, house and games captains. Members of the pupil-led eco-committee show high levels of maturity and are committed to reducing waste and conserving energy within the school.
- 3.19 Pupils develop a good appreciation of the importance of non-material aspects of life, valuing and protecting the natural world and all its creatures. Children in the EYFS experience a sense of awe as they enjoy watching at first-hand their newly planted seeds take on new life and baby chicks hatch out of their shells. They benefit from their visits to the heath to observe the changing colours of

autumn leaves and watch the delicate patterns created by falling snowflakes. Older pupils reflect on the sadness evoked by the tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Westminster Abbey, they marvel at the sight of salmon leaping in Scottish lochs and consider the plight of the homeless in London. They relish the opportunities to explore philosophical questions presented by a curriculum which challenges them to think about deeper issues, such as what is love and what is beauty. Older pupils are also able to discuss empathetically the impact of pollution and maturely consider the reason why we must promote sustainability.

- 3.20 Pupils' strong appreciation and deepening understanding of cultural traditions different to their own are gained as a result of their work in PSHE and religious studies lessons and through the cultural events in school. Pupils enthuse about the special events they enjoy to celebrate the major festivals of world faiths and cultures; notably Spanish Day, Greek Day, Chinese New Year and Diwali. They exhibit respect, sensitivity and interest in the knowledge they gain through visits by parents who lead assemblies to discuss their particular faith. Pupils are also encouraged to talk to their peers about their own culture and a recent presentation on Hinduism gave others a considerable insight into the religion. In the questionnaires, all parents who responded agree that the school acts effectively when pupils use unkind or prejudiced language to each other, for example comments about gender, ethnicity or faith.
- 3.21 All pupils are confident to make sensible decisions and they appreciate how these decisions can affect both themselves and other people. In the EYFS children happily make decisions in their play and take great delight in choosing their activities. Older pupils show excellent self-knowledge such as deciding how to choose their own success criteria in English. In discussion, pupils were keen to report that their voice is heard and valued through school council and that changes often happen as a result. For example, the introduction of a wider selection of vegetables at lunchtime including peppers and sweetcorn. Across the school pupils make informed choices about participation in extra-curricular activities to extend their interests with the support of their form teachers and a strong pastoral system.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and an assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Bridget Windley	Reporting inspector
Mr Dominic Tomalin	Compliance team inspector (Principal, ISA school)
Mrs Helen Chalmers	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)