

Heathside Preparatory School

16 New End, Hampstead, London NW3 1JA

Inspection dates

19–21 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, who is also the sole proprietor, is inspirational in her leadership. She is highly effective in developing a culture that enables pupils and staff to excel. Staff are very motivated and share leaders' drive for continuous improvement.
- The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of the independent school standards.
- The advisory board provides effective support, advice and challenge to senior leaders to ensure that the school continuously improves.
- Pupils make excellent progress from their starting points in all subjects across the curriculum because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Pupils are prepared very well for their next stage of education.
- The curriculum is exceptional and inspires pupils to flourish. The wide range of extra-curricular activities ensure that pupils acquire very strong knowledge, understanding and skills in all aspects of their education.
- Pupils are highly motivated. Their exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute considerably to their excellent progress. Pupils are punctual and enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils are kept safe and they feel safe at all times.
- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the leadership. They are extremely positive about the support their children receive for both their academic and personal development.
- British values are promoted well and pupils are prepared effectively for life in modern Britain.
- Children in the early years make good progress and are prepared well for Year 1. However, teachers do not routinely use the information they have available to them to plan activities which challenge children to make substantial progress over time. This includes the most able children.
- Leaders are aware that the outstanding teaching, learning and assessment practice that exists in the school needs to be widely shared among the newly appointed staff.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that newly appointed staff benefit from opportunities to share and learn from excellent teaching practice within the school.
- Improve children's outcomes in the early years so that they make outstanding progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers routinely plan activities which challenge children to achieve to the very best of their abilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have successfully maintained high standards since the previous inspection. They ensure that all of the independent school standards are consistently met.
- The headteacher is an inspirational and highly effective leader who is relentless in her drive to bring about improvements. She instils both staff and pupils with high expectations of themselves and each other. These high expectations are the foundation of all aspects of school life and enable pupils to thrive, both academically and in their personal development.
- Leaders check pupils' progress rigorously to ensure that all pupils achieve to the very best of their abilities. Leaders and teachers are quick to identify pupils who need extra help, and put in place timely and effective strategies to meet their needs.
- Middle leaders know their subjects very well and work closely with senior leaders to strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Recently appointed middle leaders work closely with experienced colleagues to strengthen their expertise.
- Pupils benefit greatly from a rich, broad and balanced curriculum which immerses them in their learning. Leaders ensure that equal weight is given to pupils' academic success and the skills they need to be confident, well-rounded young people. The curriculum promotes a wide range of skills, including pupils' skills in language and literacy, creative thinking, and mathematical and scientific understanding. The numerous sporting activities promote pupils' physical fitness. Pupils enjoy playing chess and they have had national success in chess competitions. There is a thriving drama programme that includes a large number of annual productions to increase and build pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. The school makes good use of nearby parks for outdoor play and to enhance pupils' teamwork skills.
- British values are taught very well. Pupils learn about democracy, the rule of law and elections, and visit the Houses of Parliament in Westminster. The elected school council provides an opportunity for pupils to express their views and opinions. Pupils learn about respect, tolerance and responsibility. Pupils are taught about different cultures and faiths and are prepared very well for life in modern Britain. The school is highly effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders' checks on teachers' performance are effective. Leaders evaluate closely the progress that staff make against their targets for improvement. There are effective systems in place to support and train staff so that they continuously improve their teaching skills. Leaders understand the need to disseminate outstanding practice to staff who have recently joined the school.
- Leaders maintain excellent links with parents. Regular newsletters and meetings ensure that parents are well informed about school events and their children's achievement.
- The school has made an application to the Department for Education for a material change to its registration in order to increase the number of pupils to 600 and to teach the key stage 3 curriculum. The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change is implemented.

- A very large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, are highly supportive of the school’s leadership. For example, ‘amazing’, ‘special’ and ‘unique’ were just some of the words parents used to describe the school.

Governance of the school

- The arrangements for governance are fulfilled through the school’s advisory board. Board members deploy their skills and expertise very effectively in order to ensure that the school continuously improves and builds on areas of success.
- Board members know the school’s strengths and areas for development well. Their well-targeted support and challenge enable leaders to evaluate the impact of their work carefully. For example, board members work closely with senior leaders to ensure that their plans for improvement focus sharply on the right priorities. Similarly, they meet leaders regularly to check that all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve equally well.
- The advisory board evaluate carefully whether arrangements to secure pupils’ welfare are fit for purpose. For example, they check that leaders follow agreed procedures for the recruitment of suitable staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders give the upmost priority to pupils’ safety and welfare. They ensure that staff are vigilant and fully understand all their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe.
- Staff receive training and regular updates on safeguarding. This ensures that they have an in-depth knowledge of the signs that indicate a pupil may be at risk of harm. They are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of any safeguarding concern.
- High-quality record-keeping means that leaders have a detailed picture of individual pupils’ circumstances. Leaders follow up any concerns about a pupil’s welfare promptly. They work closely with families and external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils are taught to identify potentially unsafe situations and what they might do to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils know about e-safety, cyber bullying, and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.
- All parents who responded to Parent View and those who spoke to inspectors agreed that their children feel safe at school.
- Leaders continuously review the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. The safeguarding policy is published on the school’s website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Senior leaders and staff have created an exceptional learning ethos across the school. Pupils are highly motivated and keen to excel in all aspects of school life.
- Teachers have an in-depth knowledge of each pupil, including pupils who have special

educational needs and/or disabilities. They use this knowledge very effectively to plan learning that supports pupils to make exceptional progress in all areas of the curriculum.

- Teachers are skilled, highly qualified and knowledgeable about their subjects. They use their excellent subject knowledge effectively to stretch pupils' understanding and skills. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson on the poetry of Walt Whitman, pupils successfully explored and analysed the differences between 'free verse' and 'blank verse', considering the impact these different forms had on the reader.
- Leaders and staff monitor pupils' progress closely. Teachers are quick to adapt activities so that they are pinpointed to pupils' needs. Where necessary, they plan highly effective additional support when pupils find new concepts challenging. This helps pupils to build successfully on their existing skills and knowledge.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and provide effective support to pupils, including those who are falling behind, to ensure that they make excellent progress.
- Across the curriculum, teachers set challenging work that extends pupils' thinking and deepens their understanding. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, pupils drew on their knowledge of algebraic equations to plot and interpret points on a graph.
- Excellent teaching is underpinned by exemplary working relationships and strong mutual respect between staff and pupils. This, together with high-quality pastoral care, motivates pupils to do their very best.
- Pupils benefit greatly from specialist teaching in subjects such as French, Latin, art, drama and music. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to inspire pupils and explain concepts clearly. As a result, pupils understand what is expected of them and are eager to apply their knowledge and skills to the activities teachers set. The most able pupils move on to more demanding tasks as soon as they are ready. This ensures that they achieve the standard of which they are capable.
- In line with the school's policy, teachers provide pupils with well-chosen homework to successfully reinforce pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils value the opportunities this provides for them to apply and deepen their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff know every individual pupil extremely well. Carefully planned support and guidance ensures that pupils' personal and welfare needs are exceptionally well catered for. Staff draw effectively on advice from external professionals and the school's pastoral support team to tailor extra support to pupils' individual circumstances.
- Parents are highly appreciative of the excellent care and guidance their children receive. Phrases such as, 'it feels more like a home', 'there is genuine commitment to inclusion' and 'exceptional empathy and care' were typical of the way parents described the school.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous, and they show great respect for staff and each other. They listen attentively to each other's viewpoints and show genuine interest and enjoyment in each other's successes. Pupils are very confident and self-motivated

learners who are proud of their school and achievements.

- Pupils whom inspectors met stated that they always feel safe in the school. They are taught well about how to keep themselves safe, including from cyber bullying and when using the internet. For example, older pupils are able to articulate how to use social media sensibly.
- Pupils develop a strong understanding of other faiths, beliefs and cultures. They are respectful of the opinions of others and understand that people have the right to make choices or hold beliefs that are different from their own. Pupils said that bullying, racism, homophobia or incidents of discrimination are rare.
- Pupils know the importance of healthy eating and keeping fit. They enjoy participating in physical education and in a wide range of sporting activities that the school offers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is exceptional. Pupils understand that the school's behaviour policy sets high expectations for their behaviour. They are committed to meeting these expectations in all aspects of school life. This is reflected in the school's records of behaviour, which show that incidents of poor behaviour are rare.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning are evident in their excellent punctuality and above-average attendance rates. Very few pupils are persistently absent from school.
- A very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Excellent teaching ensures that pupils make exceptional progress across the year groups in all subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books and school progress information show that pupils make sustained and substantial progress over time. As a result, pupils achieve to the very best of their abilities.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make the same strong progress as their classmates. Due attention is given to supporting pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, and to widening their vocabulary. This contributes successfully to this group of pupils' outstanding progress in English.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in reading. Pupils confidently use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar or difficult words and to work out the meaning of the texts they read. Pupils read widely and often, including for pleasure. They have access to a wide range of books which stretch their comprehension skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-targeted, high-quality care and support to meet their needs. As a result, they make excellent progress.
- The most able pupils are challenged to excel. Teachers routinely plan activities which deepen pupils' skills and thinking.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is exceptional across the school. Pupils master a range of

calculation skills and apply them to solve challenging problems.

- Pupils' outstanding outcomes across the curriculum are illustrated by the very high standard they achieve in external examinations in music and the performing arts.
- Pupils are prepared extremely well for their next stage of education. They develop the skills, knowledge and aptitudes necessary to face new experiences and challenges confidently.

Early years provision

Good

- As a result of high-quality support and strong teaching, children make good progress in all areas of learning. Children are prepared well for Year 1.
- Teachers question children carefully to help them explore their ideas and develop their speaking and listening skills. Stimulating activities and resources enthuse children about their learning and promote their curiosity.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers. Leaders and teachers draw effectively on guidance from external agencies to ensure that extra help is closely matched to their needs.
- The most able children typically make good progress. However, on occasions, teaching is not sufficiently challenging for the most able children. This prevents them from making substantial progress over time.
- Children in the Reception class have regular opportunities to apply their phonics skills to read and spell simple words.
- Children respond positively to instructions from staff, including when lining up and tidying the classroom. Children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are consistently positive, which makes an important contribution to their good achievement. Teachers organise resources and plan activities well so that children can try things out for themselves, both indoors and outdoors. Children display a 'have a go' approach to their learning.
- Children in the pre-Nursery are well cared for. There are good opportunities for two-year-olds to develop their speaking and listening skills. Staff respond well to their verbal and non-verbal communication, and adapt activities so that children stay focused and enjoy their learning. Teaching ensures that their development is good. Clear routines help the two-year-olds feel secure as well as understand how to play and learn alongside others.
- Good communication underpins teachers' effective partnership with parents. Parents are invited to meetings before their children start school to ensure that staff fully understand and plan for each child's learning and pastoral needs. Children get off to a smooth start to school and become familiar with routines quickly. Staff carry out the progress check for two-year-old children and share this information with parents so that they are well informed about their child's development.
- Leaders and managers have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and areas for development. They monitor the quality of teaching regularly and set targets with staff to bring about the necessary improvement. Although leaders track children's progress on an individual level, they do not systematically evaluate the progress of different groups of children. This hinders teachers from routinely using information on children's progress to plan activities that challenge them to make sustained and substantial gains in their

learning. This includes the most able children.

- Leaders and staff ensure that children are kept safe. Safeguarding is effective. Staff supervise children well. Up-to-date training, including on paediatric first aid, ensures that staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet children's welfare requirements.
- The school meets the statutory early years requirements and the independent school standards in relation to the early years provision.

School details

Unique reference number	100078
DfE registration number	202/6360
Inspection number	10012781

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

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	532
Number of part-time pupils	38
Proprietor	Remus White Ltd
Headteacher	Melissa Remus Elliot
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,000 to £18,600
Telephone number	020 3058 4011
Website	www.heathsideprep.co.uk
Email address	info@heathsideprep.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–24 May 2013

Information about this school

- Heathside Preparatory School is a co-educational, non-denominational and non-selective school for boys and girls aged from two to 14. The aim of the school is to develop each pupil as a confident, independent learner and an active, responsible citizen of the school, local community and beyond.
- There are currently 532 pupils on roll. Of these, 38 attend part time. There are no disadvantaged pupils. There are a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. About one sixth of the school population have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school population reflects the ethnic diversity of the local community. The school uses a nearby park for outdoor play and physical education teaching. Local leisure centres are also used for sports activities.

- Morning clubs and after-school care are offered to all pupils and a play scheme operates during school holidays.
- The school was last inspected in May 2013 and was judged as outstanding in all areas.
- In July 2014, an unannounced emergency inspection visit was conducted at the request of the Department for Education to check the school's compliance with the independent school regulations relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils (Part 3) and the suitability of the staff and proprietors for working with children (Part 4). The Department specifically asked the lead inspector to focus on the supervision of pupils and the checks made on staff. The inspection confirmed that the independent school standards checked were met.
- The number of pupils has increased since the previous inspection. The school has admitted two-year-old children and pupils up to the age of 14. There have also been staff changes, including the appointment of two senior leaders and several new middle leaders. The school is now split between four sites, which are walking distance apart. The school has acquired two additional premises, one to teach key stage 3 and Year 6 pupils (high school) and the other to teach pupils in Years 4 and 5 (middle school).
- All pupils in the Reception class and above attend full time. Parents have an option to send their children either part time or full time to the Nursery or the pre-Nursery.
- An advisory board was created in January 2017 to provide support, advice and challenge to the headteacher (the sole proprietor).
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school in all year groups, all jointly with either the headteacher, deputy headteacher or other senior leaders.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils in key stages 2 and 3 about their learning and views about the school. The inspectors also listened to Years 1, 2 and 5 pupils read and discussed their reading with them.
- The inspectors scrutinised books, checked the single central register of pre-employment checks on staff, and looked at pupils' attendance and behaviour records. They also examined documents and policies on the curriculum, safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, parents and members of the advisory board.
- A telephone discussion was held with the local authority's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through 227 responses to Parent View, as well as informal discussions at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered 46 responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

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Raj Mehta	Ofsted Inspector
Milan Stevanovic	Ofsted Inspector

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