

Hampstead Hill School

St Stephen's Hall, Pond Street, Hampstead, London NW3 2PP

Inspection dates

20–22 February 2018

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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher and her leadership team have built on the school's strengths since the last inspection. It has improved to become an outstanding school.
- Leaders ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Pupils make substantial progress, whatever their starting point. Teachers work closely together with leaders, using their extensive knowledge of individual pupils to plan effective lessons.
- Consistently excellent teaching in English and mathematics enables pupils to acquire skills and knowledge well beyond those expected for their age.
- The outstanding curriculum enthuses pupils. They are provided with the skills to delve deeply into a wide range of subjects.
- The school provides a rich and diverse range of opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are typically effusive in their praise for the school's inclusive and nurturing culture.
- Teachers help pupils become curious and self-motivated learners. They overtly teach skills aimed at helping pupils communicate well and share ideas.
- The early years provision prepares children exceptionally well for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils behave impeccably both in and out of lessons.
- Information about pupils and the expertise of specialist teachers is not always communicated to full effect in the wider curriculum.

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?

- Further develop opportunities for teachers to share expertise and information about pupils' progress across the whole range of subjects taught.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, who is also the sole proprietor, has successfully guided the school through a period of sustained improvement since the last inspection. She retains a high profile, which parents value, while empowering other leaders to make the most of their individual talents and enthusiasms.
- The role of middle leaders has developed well since the last inspection. There is a striking consistency in leaders' expectations and their effective approach to monitoring the quality of teaching. Leaders expect the best but are also mindful of the need to embrace individuality and avoid misplaced pressure on pupils.
- The leadership team tracks the progress of pupils relentlessly. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work with members of the team revealed leaders' encyclopaedic knowledge of individual pupils and confirmed their success in ensuring that teachers assess pupils' progress accurately.
- The headteacher is determined to further strengthen leadership, and has recently appointed a head of upper school. Leaders are not complacent, despite the excellent outcomes they have enabled pupils to achieve. They recognise, for example, that more could be done to enable specialist teachers to share their expertise and information about pupils' progress with other staff.
- Leaders follow up the wide range of training provided for teachers by making sure they put this effectively into practice. For example, training on phonics has resulted in a consistency in the teaching of reading which allows pupils of all abilities to make excellent progress.
- Leaders are relentless in checking that pupils of all abilities have an equal chance to succeed. Those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are served well because leaders identify what is needed to help them sustain strong progress. They provide and check the impact of additional support and ensure that teachers use resources well to support learning for these groups.
- The curriculum is implemented effectively so that pupils benefit from excellent opportunities to develop a curiosity about the world around them and other people. Leaders trust teachers to ensure that pupils sustain progress in a wide range of subjects while allowing them to put their own stamp on lessons. This is infectious and results in pupils becoming motivated to probe deeply into the focus of their studies. Specialist teachers bring an added dimension to the curriculum, using their excellent subject knowledge to challenge pupils to excel well beyond standards expected for their age across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the curriculum. Pupils learn to consider issues by listening to others' views as well as reflecting on their own. Opportunities for pupils to learn about the way others live their lives are plentiful. The development of British institutions is taught well. For example, pupils' work on the Great Exhibition helps them place the role of the monarchy in Britain in a historical context.

Governance

- The headteacher is the sole proprietor and does not have a governing body. However, she enlists the support and challenge of consultants who provide an external view of the school's effectiveness. This support has been very effective in ensuring that the senior leadership team has had a growing impact on driving improvement since the last inspection. The school also seeks external validation of its safeguarding arrangements to ensure that these remain robust and reflect local knowledge.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and staff and pays due regard to the most recent statutory guidance.
- Leaders' vigilance and promotion of an open culture for raising concerns supports safeguarding well. Training and updates on current guidance are provided in a timely manner. The curriculum promotes pupils' awareness of rights and responsibilities. Pupils feel safe and respected in this school. Parents and staff overwhelmingly express confidence in the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- Leaders responsible for following up concerns are tenacious in pursuing enquiries with external professionals. They understand the need to support staff in identifying signs of abuse in young children who may be unable to express themselves verbally.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers and support staff question pupils with great skill in English and mathematics lessons. When the most able pupils provide imprecise or shallow answers teaching staff probe them further and insist that they speak in grammatically accurate English.
- Teachers use their detailed knowledge of individual pupils to decide what they expect pupils to achieve. They provide clear and frequent reminders to help less confident pupils maintain accurate spelling and cursive handwriting. Teachers provide plenty of time and help to allow pupils to talk and listen to one another to develop their ideas before they write. They model accurate English in speech which helps pupils who speak English as an additional language learn good writing habits. They expect the most able pupils to enhance their extended writing with features such as alliteration and personification.
- Pupils benefit from a consistent, systematic approach to the teaching of number and place value in mathematics. This enables them to understand the connections between, for example, multiplication and division. Pupils enjoy the challenge teachers offer them to apply and deepen mathematical skills across a wide range of topics and when solving problems.
- Teaching enables pupils to sustain progress in a wide range of subjects. In science, for example, pupils in Year 1 are taught the skills needed to help them decide if a window can act as a mirror. Specialist teachers for music, art and drama help pupils deepen their understanding of these subjects beyond that typical for their age. However, leaders recognise that more could still be done to enable different teachers to share their subject knowledge with one another and jointly agree what to expect of pupils in the wider curriculum.

- Teachers combine skilful teaching of phonics with a very successful whole-school approach to inspiring pupils to develop a love of reading. Pupils who spoke and read to inspectors were typically very capable readers, with reading-comprehension skills well in advance of those typical for their age. Many had already established clear reading preferences and could explain these.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are identified promptly by teachers and provided with effective additional support. Their particular needs are sensitively met while ensuring that they can participate in the whole range of activities on offer.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders ensure that their high expectations are balanced with careful consideration of the individual needs of pupils. As a result, pupils thrive in a demanding but supportive learning environment. Parents are typically delighted with the depth of knowledge staff have about individual pupils.
- Across all year groups teachers consistently devote time to helping pupils develop skills to help them learn. For example, before group work, teachers remind pupils how they can make the best of collaborative learning. As a result, pupils who spoke to inspectors had a sophisticated level of understanding of the importance of considering the views of others.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe. They can explain how lessons help them take responsibility for some aspects of their own safety, including when they use computers and the internet. Parents and pupils appreciate what many describe as a nurturing environment across the school.
- Records kept by leaders and comments by pupils and parents indicate that discriminatory behaviour and bullying is very rare. The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for pupils to learn how to consider how others choose to live their lives. Leaders ensure that pupils who come from a diverse range of backgrounds have the chance to learn about one another's cultures and beliefs. Teachers ensure that pupils learn about different kinds of families and lifestyles as part of the planned curriculum. This promotes respect and tolerance well.
- An extensive and diverse range of clubs and activities are provided for pupils both in and out of school. As a result, their cultural and social horizons are broadened.
- Pupils express pride in being part of the school. They attend school well. Some parents told inspectors how reluctant their children are to go home at the end of the school day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils become captivated by the engrossing lessons on offer and behave impeccably. Teachers need seldom worry about any disruption to learning.
- Pupils understand the school's expectations for behaving safely around the complex premises. They treat one another kindly and share resources during playtimes and lunch

breaks.

- Pupils have a sophisticated understanding of the importance of considering the views of others. Older pupils appreciate the need to share ideas and be active listeners. Pupils consistently take care to present their work neatly and look after the equipment available to them. Leaders have involved pupils in making decisions about how to develop the school. For example, they suggested creating a mini-beast habitat in 'the meadow'. This involvement deepens pupils' sense of pride and ownership of the school environment.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make consistently strong, sustained, progress in each year group and across a range of subjects. In English and mathematics, pupils' progress is exceptional, whatever their starting point in learning.
- Leaders ensure that pupils can build on the very strong foundations in learning provided in the early years. Pupils' progress is tracked against measures of success which reflect leaders' high expectations. By the end of key stage 1, most pupils are working well above age-related expectations.
- Pupils' work and responses to reading demonstrate their excellent skills and knowledge in English. Many Year 2 pupils are able to incorporate sophisticated literary features into their writing and adapt their style to suit different audiences. The most able pupils can write persuasively about topical issues such as the impact of plastics on the environment. Pupils are typically passionate about reading and know how to use their reading skills to learn across the wider curriculum.
- Teachers ensure that the most able pupils deepen their understanding of calculation methods and mathematical ideas. This gives them the confidence to solve problems and attempt work in new contexts. Teachers also pick up when pupils are initially reluctant to risk making mistakes in mathematics, strengthening their resilience with sensitivity and great skill.
- Pupils' work in every class is rich in examples of their meticulous attention to detail, sustained, neat handwriting and deep exploration of topics across the range of subjects taught. For example, pupils' research into animals in Year 1 shows evidence of wide-ranging research.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make similar strong progress to others in the school.
- Pupils who arrive at the school with limited skills in English or weaker starting points also make strong progress. The gap between their achievement and that more typically seen in the school rapidly diminishes. As a result, nearly all of these pupils achieve at least in line with national expectations by the time they reach the end of Year 2.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders are successful in maintaining an excellent standard of teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge is applied effectively to the preparation and planning of lessons and activities. As a result, children become curious and active learners, fascinated with language. For instance, they use books like 'The rainbow fish' to investigate different pronunciations of words. Children are very well prepared for Year 1 and many exceed the achievement expected for their age.
- The teaching of phonics is of consistently high quality, ensuring that children develop confidence in reading, even when their starting points are weak. Most-able children are challenged to enrich their vocabulary and broaden their reading experiences. For instance, children in the Nursery were learning what a high school graduation involves.
- Children's progress across all of the areas of learning is strong because of the well-implemented curriculum. Their physical development is well supported in the outdoor area. However, leaders recognise that more use of outdoor learning could be made to support the development of children's writing and mathematics skills. Parents are typically delighted with the progress that children make and the information that they receive.
- Children behave considerately and safely. Teachers explain how children should develop social skills to share and consider one another's views right from the start. They expect children to take responsibility for self-care and making choices as soon as they are ready.
- Leaders have an extensive overview of the quality of provision. The progress of each child is tracked regularly. Leaders use this information well to evaluate the impact of their work.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years. Children are well supervised and the setting is well assessed for risk.
- The provision for children under the age of three who attend part time is well resourced and managed.

School details

Unique reference number	100073
DfE registration number	202/6264
Inspection number	10038147

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 8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	365
Number of part-time pupils	29
Proprietor	Mrs A Taylor
Chair	Mrs A Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs A Taylor
Annual fees (day pupils)	Up to £16,400 per year
Telephone number	020 7435 6262
Website	www.hampsteadhillschool.co.uk
Email address	office@hampsteadhillschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–4 December 2014

Information about this school

- Hampstead Hill School is a non-selective independent school for boys and girls aged from two to eight years. Children under the age of three attend on a part-time basis.
- The school was founded in 1949. The headteacher is also the sole proprietor.
- The school is situated in a deconsecrated church and an adjoining school hall in Hampstead, North West London.
- Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. Some speak English as an additional language. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The school does not receive additional funding for any of its pupils.

- The school uses a local sports hall and swimming pool for physical education. It has no additional provision for pupils off the main site.
- The school was last inspected in December 2014, when it was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- Inspectors carried out observations in lessons and looked at a wide range of pupils' work, often alongside the headteacher and other members of the leadership team.
- Inspectors conducted a tour of the premises and looked at records related to risk assessment and checks on safety.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including those related to school improvement, the monitoring of pupils' progress, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with pupils and talked with them informally. They heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors met informally with some parents and took account of 185 written submissions from parents and 53 staff questionnaires. One hundred and ninety responses to the online Parent View survey were also considered.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Ofsted Inspector

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