

# Hampton Court House School

Independent school inspection report

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A<sup>1</sup> of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Hampton Court House School in Surrey is a co-educational, independent day school for pupils aged three to 16 years. The school prepares pupils for the 11 plus and 13 plus Common Entrance and scholarship examinations in addition to GCSE examinations. Currently, there are 184 pupils on roll, including 21 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. None of the children's places are supported by government funding. Children from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 4 are taught to be bilingual, speaking English and French. A very small minority of pupils, 16%, come from minority ethnic backgrounds, with most being of White European descent. Of these, a few pupils speak English as a second language, but very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is 19% and none of the current pupils has a statement of special educational needs. Their needs relate mainly to specific learning difficulty (dyslexia) and moderate learning difficulty. The school was founded in September 2001. It aims to provide 'a clear focus on traditional, systematic teaching which stretches and stimulates every child' and to nurture 'children [who] are boundless in their enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity'. The school was previously inspected in May 2007.

## Evaluation of the school

Hampton Court House School provides a satisfactory quality of education. The curriculum is good but inconsistency in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress results in these areas being satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their behaviour. Safeguarding requirements are met and the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are satisfactory, as is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school now complies with all of the regulations, including those not met in the previous inspection.

### Quality of education

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. The good curriculum is broad and balanced. It covers English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, history, divinity, sport, art, music, modern foreign

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

languages, Latin, Greek, chess, psychology and reasoning. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage covers the six areas of learning well. From this stage to Year 4, pupils are taught very effectively in both English and French. Personal, social and health education suitably covers aspects of keeping safe and healthy, as well as rights and responsibilities. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 participate in the local authority's 'Good Citizenship' course. Careers education for older pupils consists mainly of visiting speakers, but the school is developing this aspect of the curriculum appropriately. Teachers are now supported by suitable curricular plans that focus on appropriate learning objectives. As a result, the proportion of good teaching is improving.

Particular strengths of the curriculum are modern foreign languages, notably French and Spanish, and the arts, namely music and drama. Opportunities for sport are more limited, and the school has made suitable arrangements for physical education through outsourcing this area. The external provider develops skills in a range of sports, including football, cricket, athletics, dance and netball. The curriculum is suitably enriched by a range of visits and trips, for example to museums, art galleries, Kew Gardens, Hampton Court Palace, France, Spain and the Bay of Naples. Extra-curricular activities are limited to homework, languages, ICT, music, chess and judo. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those at an early stage of learning English. Pupils praise the specialist support they receive. Their individual education plans are of good quality and include helpful strategies for teachers.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall. In the majority of the 15 lessons observed, the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to outstanding, with only one lesson that was inadequate. Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the outstanding lessons across the school, pupils are challenged to reach high standards, for example in using the target language of French or Spanish. These lessons are well structured to lead the pupils briskly to the learning objectives. Teaching is tailored to meet the needs of each pupil in the class and the pupils know how to improve their work. In good lessons, teachers use a variety of methods to engage all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to promote their good progress. For example, history comes alive through role play and probing questions. Equations are related to everyday use through practical work in mathematics using balancing scales and demonstration on the board. The rate of progress is slower in satisfactory lessons because teachers use a limited range of strategies, mainly question and answer. This does not engage all of the pupils or develop their independent learning skills. In one lesson observed, pupils made inadequate progress because the teaching was not focused on developing their skills in responding orally and in writing to the text. All teachers have good subject knowledge.

The use of assessment is satisfactory. The school is developing an appropriate system for monitoring the progress of individual pupils in all subjects in order to address any underachievement. Teachers' assessments each half-term are helpfully

compared with baseline data such as reading ages. The absence of target grades, however, means that it is difficult to judge whether pupils are achieving as well as they should. In addition, teachers lack the guidance of targets for planning the level of work for individual pupils. Most pupils know their current grades but they do not always know how to improve them. While some teachers indicate next steps to improvement in their marking of pupils' work, this practice is not yet consistent across all subjects.

Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment. This is particularly so in GCSE courses. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. This is due to effective use of the Foundation Stage Profile to match activities to the needs of each child. Older pupils make good progress towards the 11 plus and 13 plus Common Entrance examinations and most go on to the schools of their choice.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

A special feature of pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is the way in which pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards learn to respect, and take responsibility for, themselves and others. Pupils report that this is due to the 'freedom' they are given in the school and the fact that teachers 'think of [them] as responsible.' Pupils in all year groups get on well together. They say that the school 'is like a family' where 'no-one is left out.' They play well together and are confident to turn to any member of staff if they are concerned. Pupils learn about public services through visits from the police and medical profession. They appreciate the many opportunities they are given to develop socially and culturally through music, drama, visits, trips and discussions with each other and with staff from different cultural backgrounds. This promotes good racial harmony as pupils value the diverse cultures represented in the school. Good relationships promote pupils' enjoyment of school, their positive attitudes to learning and their regular attendance. They also help the pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Pupils attribute their good behaviour in lessons and around the school to the fact that staff know them well and expect them to regulate their own behaviour, in the knowledge that sanctions will be applied if necessary. Pupils explained that previous problems with behaviour had been addressed by tighter enforcement of sanctions by the staff. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school, for example as library monitors, and to the wider community, as in raising funds for charity. They provide Christmas presents for children in a Sri Lankan orphanage. In developing good social skills and skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, the pupils are prepared well for the next phase of their education and future employment.

### Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are satisfactory, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, that bullying is not a

problem and that staff help them to talk through and address any issues that arise. They adopt healthy lifestyles due to the healthy food options in the dining hall and opportunities for physical exercise through sport. All of the required policies are in place and are readily available, including in the staff handbook. All safeguarding requirements are met. The policy for child protection and the training of the designated person and staff are up to date. Risk assessments for visits outside the school are now completed fully. A small number of health and safety risks were reported to the school. A suitable three-year plan is in place to increase the accessibility of the curriculum and premises. Admission and attendance registers are maintained appropriately and children under the age of three years are not admitted. A recently introduced electronic registration system is effective in helping the school to follow up and reduce unauthorised absence.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Procedures for confirming the suitability of the proprietor and staff meet regulations for safeguarding children and include the maintenance of a single central register of the checks undertaken. Procedures for staff recruitment are now robust and records appropriately maintained. They include all of the required checks.

### School's premises and accommodation

The school is situated in a beautiful historic house with many original features and extensive grounds. This adds to pupils' aesthetic appreciation, but restricts the provision of indoor physical education and access to a dedicated outdoor area for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school manages the available space well, ensuring that it is conducive to effective learning, and has created specialist facilities for art, drama, ICT, music and science. It now provides suitable facilities for pupils who are ill. The accommodation is maintained and decorated to a satisfactory standard.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Provision of information has been improved since the previous inspection and all of the regulations are now met. The website has recently been updated and includes a dedicated site for parents that lists the policies available. Newsletters outline the topics to be studied in all areas of the curriculum each term. The Friends of Hampton Court House provide parent representatives for each year group as a point of contact. This system is effective in maintaining communication with the school.

In total, 115 pre-inspection questionnaires were returned by parents. The majority of parents were fully positive about the work of the school and several commented on how well it 'allows the individual nature of the child to flourish.' A minority of parents raised concerns about the lack of communication, high staff turnover, homework, inadequate heating and lack of supervision. Inspectors found that effective systems for communication had been introduced, that staffing was becoming more stable

although the quality of teaching remained inconsistent, and that homework was used regularly to enhance lessons. They agree with parents that not all areas of the school are heated sufficiently in cold weather. During the inspection, a suitable level of supervision was provided and the school is aware of the need to ensure rigorous supervision of pupils at all times.

## Procedures for handling complaints

Procedures for handling complaints have been improved and now meet all of the regulations. The policy is readily available to parents on the school's website. There were no formal complaints in the past year.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Children achieve good outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although the lack of a dedicated outside area and resources limits the full range of children's learning experiences. They attain particularly well in communication, language and literacy due to the emphasis given to French and English. Children enjoy learning. They learn quickly and make good progress towards the early learning goals. Their good personal, social and emotional development is evident in the way that they take responsibility for tidying up. Good relationships with staff help to foster children who are friendly, confident and articulate. The quality of provision and safeguarding is satisfactory. Adults have good knowledge of all the requirements for promoting children's learning and welfare. There is a satisfactory balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated learning. Teachers manage children's behaviour well. They create an interesting learning environment in the classroom, although access to outside play and large equipment is restricted.

The overall effectiveness of the setting is satisfactory, as are its leadership and management. The proprietor and coordinator are appropriately focused on improvement. Strengths and areas for development are identified accurately through self-evaluation. Children make good progress and welfare requirements are met. Although staff have not yet attended paediatric first aid training, this has been booked for the spring term. There is a good partnership with parents. However, some resources within the classroom, and particularly in the outside area, are limited.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations').

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that pupils' progress is consistently good in all subjects by:
  - disseminating the examples of good and outstanding practice
  - improving procedures for assessing pupils' progress
  - informing pupils systematically how they can improve their work.
- develop resources in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in particular for the outdoor area.



Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?		✓		
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?			✓	
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?			✓	
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?			✓	

## School details

Name of school	Hampton Court House		
DCSF number	936/6586		
Unique reference number	133443		
Type of school	Co-educational day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2001		
Age range of pupils	3–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 106	Girls: 67	Total: 173
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 8	Girls: 3	Total: 11
Annual fees (day pupils)	Nursery Year to Year 1 £9,609		
	Year 2 to Year 6 £10,881		
	Year 7 to Year 11 £12,273		
Address of school	Hampton Court House Hampton Court Road East Molesey Surrey KT8 9BS		
Telephone number	020 8943 0889		
Fax number	020 8977 5357		
Email address	office@hamptoncourthouse.co.uk		
Headteacher	Lady Eliana Houstoun-Boswall		
Proprietor	Lady Eliana Houstoun-Boswall		
Reporting inspector	Sue Frater HMI		
Dates of inspection	19–20 January 2010		