

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Headington Preparatory School

January 2023

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School's Details

School	Headington Preparatory School		
DfE number	931/6064		
Registered charity number	309678		
Address	Headington Preparatory School 26 London Road Headington Oxford Oxfordshire OX3 7PB		
Telephone number	01865 759400		
Email address	reception@headington.org		
Headmistress	Mrs Jane Crouch		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Sandra Phipkin		
Age range	3 to 11		
Number of pupils on roll	252		
	EYFS 28 Juniors 224		
Inspection dates	17 to 19 January 2023		

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1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Founded in 1915 by a group of evangelical Christians, Headington Preparatory School is a day school for female pupils. The school comprises the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children aged 3 to 5 years, Key Stage 1 (KS1) for pupils aged 5 to 7 years and Key Stage 2 (KS2) for pupils aged 8 to 11 years. The school is located about a mile from the centre of Oxford. The school operates as a charitable trust administered by a single governing body. Since the last inspection an outdoor learning area has been added and the Nursery and Reception classrooms have been refurbished. The curriculum has been redesigned and redeveloped particularly for the STEM subjects.

What the school seeks to do

1.2 The school aims to provide a stimulating and forward-thinking environment, where achievement, enterprise, creativity and leadership are nurtured; to encourage, challenge and value every individual, promoting honesty, openness, tolerance and understanding; to cultivate self-confidence, independence and responsibility and to benefit the local community by providing access to educational expertise and facilities.

About the pupils

1.3 Most pupils live in the Oxford area and come from a range of professional, educational and international backgrounds. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is well above average for those taking similar tests nationally. The school has identified 19 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include communication, mental health difficulties, and cognitive needs. There are 12 pupils who receive additional specialist support. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language for 23 pupils, of whom eight receive specialist support. Data used by the school have identified 40 pupils as being the most able in the population. The curriculum is modified for them through extension activities which complement the school's stretch and challenge programme.

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. 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 <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. 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: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> 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 are excellent communicators who show outstanding skills; they are articulate, use vocabulary appropriately and confidently and listen well from a very young age.
 - Pupils display excellent attitudes to learning from an early age; their ability to work independently and collaboratively is outstanding.
 - Pupils from an early age show high levels of knowledge, and skills and excellent understanding in lessons and discussions.
 - Pupils rapidly develop their skills and achieve high standards in their application of information and communication technology (ICT).
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils make confident decisions and considered independent choices in all activities.
 - Pupils' levels of social development are high. They work together effectively and collaboratively to solve problems and achieve common goals.
 - Pupils' moral understanding is excellent. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and are sensitive to how their behaviour affects others.
 - Pupils make a significant contribution to the life of the school and fulfil their responsibilities with diligence and commitment.

Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
 - Enable all pupils to make the best possible progress by ensuring that effective feedback is provided and followed up in all subjects and year groups.

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 are excellent communicators who speak articulately, confidently, and passionately about their learning; it is clearly an expected part of daily life. Their discussion and communication skills with each other and with adults are excellent. They listen well and read with confidence and a sense of understanding. Written work is excellent, and pupils are very skilful in writing for a variety of audiences

and in a variety of genres. Pupils take pride in their work and present it neatly. They use sophisticated vocabulary and understand advanced concepts such as 'non-standard units', 'propaganda' and 'energy transfer'. Over time pupils of all abilities improve their understanding of how to write creatively. Pupils have the confidence to speak in assemblies and when giving informative explanations in lessons. In a Year 6 class, pupils spoke confidently when acting independently written short scenes explaining the dangers of living in Germany during World War 2. Pupils communicate extremely well in a variety of situations and respond to complex instructions intelligently and diligently from an early age. Collaborative learning is a major factor in developing pupils' communication skills. In a Year 4 English lesson, highly effective group conversations helped all pupils to develop accurate subject-specific vocabulary when identifying inference in a text. Working in small groups in an upper-school science lesson was effective in helping pupils to develop their understanding of correct scientific vocabulary and a thorough understanding of how to use the terminology in context.

- 3.6 Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They display extremely high levels of perseverance and commitment in lessons. They collaborate well and are co-operative and highly competent learners who seek help from their peers with confidence. They are eager to learn and use their initiative to make independent progress by taking responsibility for their own learning from an early age. This was seen in a science lesson where pupils interacted well to test electrical circuits and formulated their own hypotheses when testing the effects of a switch. They regularly make independent decisions as seen in a Reception mathematics lesson in which children successfully used a range of resources to develop their sense of number. Pupils love learning and benefit from the school's strategies to promote their learning habits. They show a thirst for knowledge and an ambition to achieve at the highest possible level. They work conscientiously, displaying determination and resilience. In a history lesson, pupils displayed great curiosity and developed high levels of reasoning when analysing and interpreting sources about Henry VIII. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes and see this as part of the learning process. They work positively together to produce the desired outcomes in their academic studies, sport, music, art and drama.
- 3.7 Pupils' knowledge, skills and application of ICT are excellent and they make progress due to the infrastructure and curriculum, which they appreciate. They use ICT competently and achieve highly in computing lessons. Pupils are highly articulate when explaining the ways in which they use ICT as part of their daily learning. In a Year 4 computing lesson pupils showed excellent knowledge and understood fully the dangers of being online and the preventative measures they should take. Pupils with SEND in Year 5 dictated their work on to their tablets, thus allowing them to make excellent progress in line with their peers. Pupils use portable devices to good effect for research and homework purposes. For example, Year 3 pupils showed high levels of competence in creating frames for an animation project. Pupils are experienced and very able users of the online learning platforms they access in order to further their learning in other subjects and access extension tasks.
- 3.8 Pupils of all abilities achieve excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. They develop skills over time in a wide range of subjects and build on acquired knowledge. All pupils use subject-appropriate skills to a very high level across the curriculum, and this consistently improves their understanding. This was seen, for example, in Reception where children developed excellent physical skills when they explored various apparatus in order to create simple movement sequences. Pupils apply their skills extremely well to tasks in different areas. In a Year 3 science lesson they linked their knowledge of pitch from their music lessons to the fair test that they were conducting. Pupils in a Year 6 science lesson used their analytical skills to great effect when discussing electrical circuits and the flow of electrons and energy transfer. These skills are developed by the use of probing, effective questioning which engages all pupils. They have an excellent knowledge of different methods to achieve their objectives. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson pupils applied a range of problem-solving techniques to solve one-step number problems. More able pupils were challenged successfully with multi-step problems which they completed with great accuracy.

- 3.9 Pupils make excellent progress throughout the school, supported by the comprehensive systems for tracking attainment and individualised support. They thrive on challenge. Those with SEND or EAL make excellent progress as they are extremely well supported by highly experienced specialist staff. The excellent progress made by the pupils is in accordance with the school's stated aims to encourage, challenge and value individuals, aims which are supported by an excellent range of resources and facilities which allow pupils to develop practical, investigative, experimental and research skills. In many instances pupils are working beyond expectations for their age at the top of the school. Pupils make excellent progress in lessons due to the structure offered by staff and the high expectations they set. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, all the pupils who responded agreed that they are encouraged to think for themselves and that they are helped to learn and make progress. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that teaching enables their children to make progress and develop skills for the future. In well-paced and interactive lessons, progress is rapid. This was seen in a Year 5 English lesson where pupils demonstrated an excellent understanding of what makes a complex sentence and the use of subordinate clauses. They wrote effectively using descriptive language and personification in their own sentences.
- Levels of numeracy by the time pupils reach the top of the school are excellent. Throughout the school they have a very clear understanding of number. They use their mathematical skills in several areas of the curriculum and they explain accurately how mathematics is used in their daily lives. Pupils have an excellent command of key mathematical terms. Pupils' understanding of number is excellent and the cumulative nature of the subject enables pupils to make progress in line with and often exceeding that expected for their age. Pupils explain the theory behind their mathematics to describe what they are doing and why. For example, Year 6 pupils explained clearly how numeracy skills are used in science to calculate how much energy is contained in a crisp. In a Year 5 maths lesson pupils showed high levels of competency when changing fractions to decimals because of their understanding of the concept of significant figures. In a Year 3 lesson pupils worked conscientiously and collaboratively on the 'Think Pink' challenge based on multiplication squares. Pupils constantly challenge themselves and extend their understanding through discussions and are encouraged to do so.
- 3.11 Pupils' study skills are excellent and they use them effectively across the curriculum. Pupils can predict, analyse and record their findings appropriately. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson pupils estimated the lengths of objects using non-standard units of measurement before measuring them accurately. They reasoned well and successfully compared longer and shorter in their discussions. In a Year 6 science lesson pupils tested their own hypothesis by analysing the various effects of different components in a circuit and thereby extended their learning. Pupils work effectively with a range of resources in order to develop their thinking and reasoning skills. In a Year 4 art lesson pupils effectively analysed the work of the artist Faith Ringgold and carefully considered how they could use her ideas and techniques to create their own pictures. Pupils show initiative with their own research as seen in project work where they effectively found and recorded information about biomes and habitats, selecting appropriate ways in which to present their projects to an audience.
- 3.12 Pupils achieve highly outside of the formal curriculum. They achieve excellent results by the time they leave the school and are successful in a wide range of subjects at scholarship level. Pupils achieve excellent results in music board examinations, external speech and drama examinations and in external competitions such as the Primary Maths Challenge. Pupils are successful in sports and regularly reach the national finals of sporting events such as biathlon and swimming. They enjoy wideranging success in local chess competitions and national events, as they are encouraged to follow their passions. They have a healthy level of competitiveness and always want to do their best. Pupils with special talents achieve highly and are supported by staff in clubs and as part of the stretch and challenge programme. Pupils' excellent academic and extra-curricular achievements owe much to the governance of the school, which has been instrumental in providing much-appreciated facilities which offer plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop their learning and interests. Governors show great awareness, passion and empathy for the pupils' academic and personal needs.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils make decisions effectively and assuredly due to the number of opportunities that exist for them to do so. They make wise decisions based on a clear knowledge of right and wrong and speak enthusiastically about the support they receive from adults. In a Year 6 PSHE lesson pupils made sensible and considered decisions about other people's behaviour in a number of scenarios, explaining their conclusions with clarity and using advanced vocabulary. Pupils are very aware that the decisions they make will have an impact on their success both in the short and long term. They show an excellent understanding of decision-making with reference to the school's learning habits which help them stay focused on positive outcomes. Members of the school council are rightly proud of decisions they have made which have had a positive impact on the life of the school, such as creating a quiet area in the playground to enhance pupil well-being.
- 3.15 Pupils' social development is excellent. They show high levels of collaboration, as seen in a Year 6 French lesson where pupils helped each other to express the correct amount of euros they were holding when requested by the teacher. Older pupils help the younger children effectively through the much appreciated big sister/ little sister initiative. They interact well and younger pupils respond accordingly. High quality relationships exist amongst all children. Children in the EYFS are aware of each other's needs, take turns and work very effectively together, as seen in a mathematics lesson where pupils shared resources and ideas well to solve problems about ratio. Their collaborative efforts ensured all pupils understood the new concepts fully. In a Year 6 PSHE lesson pupils shared pertinent and relevant ideas about the differences between stealing and borrowing with each other and the teacher. In a Year 5 English lesson all pupils worked extremely well in pairs to convey specific moods. They discussed different ideas and collaboratively chose vocabulary to fit the given sentences. In a Year 4 drama lesson, pupils worked well together to explore character and confidently created a powerful opening scene for their class play. A real sense of community is apparent and relationships are strong, good-humoured, caring and sensitive.
- 3.16 Pupils' moral understanding is excellent and a strength of the school. Learning habits programme is thoroughly embedded, giving pupils a heightened sense of right and wrong. They discuss them with knowledge and assurance. They appreciate the need for rules and understand the systems of rewards and sanctions. Pupils behave well and respond positively and quickly when called back to order in lessons. In their questionnaire responses almost all parents and all pupils agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Inspection evidence wholly supports this view. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly and courteously around the school, which creates an appropriate atmosphere for productive study. Pupils appreciate the low level intervention by staff to help them resolve any issues that might occur. They take responsibility for their own behaviour seriously and modify it accordingly. In discussions, pupils were keen to convey that it is a kind, happy and welcoming school. They spoke about their close friendships as well as the importance of being friends with everyone. They have an enhanced understanding of the way in which they should behave towards each other and why kindness should prevail. They spoke articulately about the need to make the right behaviour choices and the potential impact of making the wrong choices.
- 3.17 Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community and are actively involved. They participate enthusiastically and competitively. Pupils spoke about how they are involved in keeping an eye on the friendship bench to check if there is anybody that needs to be helped and included. Pupils make a positive contribution to the life of the local community through impressive fundraising and charitable events, such as making soup for a local homeless charity. They are actively engaged in selecting the charities they support and they talk animatedly about organising events to raise funds. The Year 6 charity monitors are highly committed to their role. Pupils greatly enjoy and speak enthusiastically about the number of roles of responsibility available to them which they undertake with great efficiency and pride. They value having a voice and feel that they are listened to and that

- the school council has a genuine palpable impact. In accordance with the school's aims each member of the school is valued as making a positive difference.
- 3.18 Pupils develop excellent levels of self-confidence, self-esteem, self-discipline and resilience. They know how to improve their own learning and performance and set high targets which they invariably achieve, especially when feedback is constructive and gives clear next steps. Where this does not occur pupils' understanding of how they might improve is less well-developed. They have a clear understanding of who they are. Pupils speak enthusiastically in discussions about being allowed to be themselves and are supported in becoming who they want to be. Pupils demonstrate high levels of perseverance and they respond to challenges with commitment and enthusiasm. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrated excellent resilience when working through challenging fraction problems relative to their ability. Pupils have great trust in the staff, which gives them the confidence to have a go and not be afraid to fail in their learning as they understand that these are points for future progression. In a Year 4 English lesson pupils carefully reflected on their own learning when comparing retrieval and inference in a text.
- 3.19 Pupils have a well-developed sense of spirituality. They understand and appreciate the faiths and cultures of other religions and speak with empathy about tolerance and harmony. They appreciate the wonders of the natural world or a calm and quiet atmosphere in which they can sit and reflect. Pupils value lessons where reflection time is given. They take advantage of opportunities to reflect during extra-curricular activities, for example in knitting club where a calm atmosphere was created and pupils responded accordingly by interacting and supporting each other effectively. Pupils spoke eloquently about the benefit of art on their well-being, describing feelings of happiness, relaxation and getting lost in the moment. In assembly a pupil shared her love of bird watching and confidently explained how it made her feel. Pupils respond positively and reflectively on how music is used in some lessons to encourage thinking time. Pupils appreciate the success of other pupils and freely offer praise and congratulations. In the early years setting children develop a natural awe and wonder for the world through the woodland learning environment.
- 3.20 Pupils have a heightened awareness of the need for respect and tolerance. They speak emphatically and openly about everybody being treated fairly and equally and they see each other as people regardless of any cultural differences. The ethos of inclusivity permeates the school and is reflected in the pupils' acceptance and appreciation of everyone. The pupils value the diversity within the school. In discussion they could not recall any instances of unfavourable treatment of others. Pupils are respectful of their peers and show high levels of sensitivity. They are eager to learn more about different cultures from their peers and adults. They respect cultures, faiths and religions different to their own. Pupils show an understanding of the values of democracy, the rule of law, and mutual respect and tolerance and discuss them knowledgeably. Pupils are outward looking in their approach to local, national and international communities.
- 3.21 Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and healthy is excellent. They are able to articulate how to stay safe and healthy and exhibit excellent knowledge about what this means in practice. They know how to make positive choices to lead happy and successful lives. Pupils understand the importance of diet, exercise and good mental health and know the effect these can have on their lifestyle. Pupils make the most of the plentiful opportunities to learn about dangers in the world. They know how to stay safe and have an excellent understanding of how to deal with any online incidents. Pupils are confident that staff will always be available and act accordingly if needed. Pupils know how to stay safe physically and mentally, exercise and take responsibility to be safe in all they do.

Inspection Evidence 13

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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. 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

Mr Paul Easterbrook Reporting inspector

Mrs Helen Snow Compliance team inspector (Former headmistress, IAPS school)

Dr Karen McNerney Team inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)