



**Material Change Inspection Report**

**Headington School Oxford**

**January 2024**

## School's details

<b>School</b>	Headington School			
<b>DfE number</b>	931/6064			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	309678			
<b>Address</b>	Headington School Headington Road Headington Oxford Oxfordshire  OX3 7TD			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 759100			
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@headington.org			
<b>Headmistress</b>	Mrs Caroline Jordan			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Carol Oster Warriner			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Headington School Oxford Ltd			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	1075			
	<b>Day pupils</b>	868	<b>Boarders</b>	207
	<b>EYFS</b>	37	<b>Prep</b>	225
	<b>Seniors</b>	601	<b>Sixth Form</b>	212
<b>Date of inspection</b>	12 January 2024			

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school.

- 1.1 Headington School is an independent day and boarding school for female pupils -. It is located in a suburb of Oxford. It was originally founded in 1915 and is a charitable trust, overseen by a council of governors, who also oversee Headington Prep School. The school has 129 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils have an education, health and care plan. There are 150 pupils who speak English as an additional language. Both senior and prep schools were previously inspected in January 2023, each receiving a focused compliance and educational quality inspection.

### Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to merge with the partly co-educational Rye St Antony School to create a school for pupils aged 3-18, entitled Headington Rye Oxford. This school would operate from September 2024 as a single co-educational prep school for pupils aged 3 to 11 on the site of Rye St Antony School, and a senior school for female pupils aged 11-18 located on the site of Headington Oxford senior school. There are no proposals to change the existing boarding provisions to become co-educational. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraphs 2 (curriculum) and 2A (relationships and sex education)	<b>Met</b>
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders)	<b>Met</b>
Part 5, paragraphs 23-30 (premises and accommodation)	<b>Met</b>
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	<b>Met</b>
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	<b>Met</b>

## 2. Inspection findings

### Quality of education provided – curriculum and relationships and sex education (RSE), [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2 and 2A]

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 Leaders, and managers of the school curriculum ensure that the suitably broad curriculum covers all the required areas for the age range of pupils, including in early years. Implementation of both the curriculum policy and detailed plans is effective. This enables pupils to learn and make progress in acquiring suitable knowledge and skills. Suitable provision is made for pupils' individual needs. The curriculum does not undermine British values and suitably prepares pupils for life in British society. There is an appropriate personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) scheme of work in place which includes careers guidance for pupils over the age 11. It also includes appropriate provision for the teaching of relationships education in the prep school and RSE in the senior school, taking into account all the required guidance, in line with the schools suitable RSE policy.
- 2.3 Governors and leaders have created a suitable timeline of action to plan for the curriculum needs of pupils from September 2024. These plans include a suitable analysis of risk associated with the merger and in particular with the introduction of male pupils. They take into account the ethos of both the schools. Plans include ensuring that pupils who will be starting public examination courses from September 2024 can make suitable option choices. Those already taking examination courses will be able to continue to do so without disruption. Staff in key leadership roles are working effectively to ensure that the curriculum and relationships education policies and plans for the prep school of Headington Rye School will meet the needs of both male and female pupils. Appropriate resources and staff training are being planned to support co-education, particularly in sports. It is likely that the school will continue to meet the standards from September 2024.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.4 The school meets the standard.
- 2.5 The school promotes pupils' development of appropriate spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and associated skills. It provides both suitable planning and schemes of work in PSHE. These, as well as pastoral structures and school assembly programmes, are effectively designed to achieve this.
- 2.6 Effective planning for the proposed merger shows due consideration to ensuring that a culture of mutual respect and tolerance for all people in British society is promoted. This includes the promotion of respect for those with protected characteristics, including gender and diversity. It is likely that the school will continue to meet the standards.

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8]

#### Safeguarding policy

- 2.7 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.8 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

#### Safeguarding implementation

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils, including those in the early years and boarders, are implemented effectively. This includes those relating to the Prevent duty. The school ensures a culture of listening to pupils. Pupils confirm that they have a variety of people to whom they can turn for support. There are varied mechanisms they may use to access help, including discussion with an independent listener for boarders. Pupils receive a response when they express concerns, and appropriate action is taken where necessary. This was confirmed during interviews with pupils and staff and by records of safeguarding. Pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe, including when online. The school acts promptly to deal with any allegations of misuse of social media when brought to their attention, in line with relevant school policies. These actions include the appropriate use of serious sanctions. Filtering and monitoring of technology within the school is appropriate.
- 2.11 All staff, including those in positions of responsibility for safeguarding, are suitably trained in line with locally agreed procedures. Interviews with leaders and staff from all parts of the school confirm they fully understand their different roles in safeguarding. In particular, staff understand different types of abuse including child-on-child abuse and sexual harassment, and the particular vulnerability of pupils with SEND. Relevant staff are aware of the safeguarding needs of male pupils. Records show that staff report any safeguarding concerns to the appropriate person in a timely fashion. Senior leaders communicate concerns to relevant outside agencies effectively. They take prompt action where concerns are raised, or incidents occur.
- 2.12 Suitable arrangements to handle allegations against adults working with pupils are implemented effectively. The local authority designated officer is used appropriately for support and guidance. Safeguarding is effectively managed. There are suitable arrangements for whistleblowing by staff. Interviews with staff confirmed suitable understanding of these and a willingness to act appropriately should the need arise. Staff also understand the need to report concerns expressed at a low level. There is an open culture of self-referral with appropriate guidance provided in the staff code of conduct. Staff recruitment procedures follow statutory guidance.
- 2.13 Governors ensure that appropriate oversight of safeguarding procedures is maintained, including through an effective annual review. There are sufficiently regular and effective reviews of safeguarding practice. Governors are appropriately trained in safeguarding. Governors and leaders have ensured effective planning and identification of potential safeguarding risks for the merger. This includes ensuring that a team of key staff, appropriate in number and experience, will be in place to deal with ongoing safeguarding requirements of the whole school population on both sites. The team is well organised to ensure appropriate transfer and assimilation of information relating to individual needs of pupils. There is suitable awareness of the need to ensure consistency in approaches to safeguarding, such as in record keeping, once a merger takes place. This makes it likely that the regulations will continue to be met on the merger of the two schools.

**Premises and accommodation – toilet and washing facilities, medical facilities, maintenance, acoustics, lighting, water supply, provision of outdoor space and boarding [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23-30]**

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 The school provides suitable toilet and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils. It provides appropriate accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils and for the short-term care of sick pupils. The school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein

are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils is ensured. In discussions, staff and pupils confirmed that, in their experience, all matters of maintenance are dealt with satisfactorily and swiftly. The acoustic conditions of the school facilities and internal and external lighting are suitable. Suitable drinking water facilities, clearly marked as such, are provided. The school provides suitable outdoor space for pupils' physical education and for their recreation, including outdoor education areas in the EYFS.

- 2.16 Plans seen, together with a visit to the site of the proposed merged prep school, show that the school has given due attention to the specific needs of the pupils who will be using this site from September 2024. Facilities of a comparable standard are likely to be suitable both for the age range and for use by male and female pupils. Plans indicate the site will be suitably adapted to cater for the larger number of early years children envisaged. They take into account the need for children to be in sight and sound of staff and to have access to a safe outdoor space for recreation and learning. Planning also shows due attention to the provision of a suitable number of toilet and washing facilities throughout the site, for separate use by male and female pupils above the age of eight. Specialist teaching and dining facilities will be appropriately adapted, and the medical room will be relocated taking all the regulatory requirements into consideration. The boarding house on this site provides suitable accommodation for female boarders aged 11-18. Those responsible for the oversight of the merger, understand the importance of maintaining the current appropriate acoustic and lighting conditions as buildings are adapted. Similarly, plans cater for maintaining an adequate supply of drinking water facilities on this site. It is likely that the school will continue to meet the standards across both sites from September 2024.

### **Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]**

- 2.17 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

### **Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]**

- 2.18 The school meets the standard.
- 2.19 The proprietor ensures that senior leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all the other standards are consistently met. They actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. Suitable planning has been undertaken for the proposed merger, including effective assessment of any potential risks. Planning indicates suitable actions to manage risk and these have been executed effectively so far. It is likely that the standards will continue to be met with the proposed merger.

### **3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection**

#### **Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to merge with Rye St Antony School, to create Headington Rye School be granted. Detailed plans exist to adapt the school's curriculum and RSE suitably. The proprietor has made suitable arrangements to ensure the continuation of effective safeguarding. Plans to adapt the available accommodation and facilities available are being effectively enacted and these are effectively designed to meet the needs of all pupils using both sites.

## **4. Summary of evidence**

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors. She visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.