



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

## **Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report**

**Berkhampstead School and Day Nursery**

**December 2019**



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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Berkhampstead School and Day Nursery			
<b>DfE number</b>	916/6038			
<b>Early Years registration number</b>	EY442298			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	325018			
<b>Address</b>	Berkhampstead School Pittville Circus Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL52 2QA			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01242 523263			
<b>Email address</b>	office@berkhampsteadschool.co.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Richard Cross			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Jane Kent			
<b>Age range</b>	3 months to 11 years			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	397			
	<b>Day Nursery</b>	128	<b>Pre-preparatory</b>	118
	<b>Preparatory</b>	151		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4 to 5 December 2019			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Berkhamstead Preparatory School and Day Nursery is a day school for pupils aged three months to eleven years. Founded in 1945, the school now occupies three sites in close proximity to each other in a residential area of Cheltenham. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school comprises three sections: the day nursery, for children aged from three months to four years; the pre-preparatory department for pupils aged from three to seven years and the preparatory department for pupils aged from seven to eleven years.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a stimulating, happy, caring and fun environment, which encourages effort and achievement, focusing on pupils' individual strengths and supporting their weaknesses, whilst fostering a genuine feeling of community, based on strong family and Christian values. The school endeavours to foster a 'can do' attitude, preparing all pupils to transfer confidently to the next stage of their education.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils are predominantly from white British families with a range of business and professional backgrounds, mostly from the Cheltenham area and villages in the Cotswolds. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability profile of the school is above average. The school has identified 38 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. No pupils in the school have English as an additional language (EAL). Data used by the school have identified 37 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 14 other pupils because of their special talents in the creative arts.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports 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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. 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.

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 full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) 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, the 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 uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 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 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### **PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 **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**

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **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**

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.13 A range of information is variously 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.

**2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

2.15 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.

**2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.17 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.

**2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

## The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 2.19 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.20 The curriculum is very well structured and meets the needs and interests of the children. It supports the children's development in the prime areas of their learning extremely well, including those with SEND. All children under the age of two make good or better progress from their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- 2.21 Due to the excellent levels of care that the setting provides, the personal and emotional development of the children is excellent. They feel safe, secure and happy. Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements and they fulfil their responsibility for protecting children in their care diligently.
- 2.22 There is evidence of leadership and management's strong commitment to continuous improvement through detailed, cohesive self-evaluation and a clear vision for future developments. This ensures that all children receive the best possible support and care. The recommendation from the previous inspection is met.

### Quality of education

- 2.23 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 2.24 The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for children to develop their communication and language, physical skills and their personal, social and emotional development. Regular monitoring of the curriculum and the evaluation of the activities provided ensure that all children are very well supported. Detailed planning shows that next steps form the basis of the planning for individual children's learning needs and interests.
- 2.25 Staff have consistently high expectations for the children in their care. They have an excellent understanding of how babies and young children learn and develop. Carefully planned activities, which reflect the interest and stage of development of the child, allow them to explore, discover and be curious. This was observed when a child was being supported in transporting water in a jug from one end of the garden to the other to investigate how the water flowed down the guttering.
- 2.26 Staff readily engage with children during routine activities and take every opportunity to develop language and social skills. They read and sing with the children, encouraging them to repeat words, answer simple questions and join in with songs and actions. Positive feedback is given to children. Staff praise and encourage them effectively so that they know when they are doing well and how to develop their attitudes and skills for learning.
- 2.27 Regular assessments contribute to the staff's knowledge about what each child can do and help to identify the next steps in their learning. These assessments are shared with parents when they come into the setting and they are able to contribute through *What I can do at home* forms which inform the setting of children's significant experiences and achievements at home. All assessments are monitored and tracked against the expected levels of development for children's age. This serves to identify those children who may be falling behind so that the curriculum can be tailored to support them appropriately. High quality teaching and support, ensure that all children, from the earliest age are very well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

### Behaviour and attitudes

- 2.28 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.

- 2.29 Children show great enjoyment in their learning. They are very curious and inquisitive and are keen to explore their surroundings. Children make excellent use of the available resources in the rooms. These allow them to explore real life objects and experiment with different textures, thereby fostering the children's innate curiosity. Babies were seen showing perseverance when trying to put shakers in a cardboard tube and make them come out of the other end by shaking and banging them. During a singing session, children explored percussion instruments and expressed their individuality by using scarves when moving to music. Children can use spoons to feed themselves and some can find their own cups showing that they are developing independence.
- 2.30 Children demonstrate great pride when they achieve something and are keen to recognise each other's successes. An older baby who was repeatedly throwing and retrieving a ball went on to involve another child in his play and showed great delight by smiling and clapping when the other child responded by attempting to throw it back. Children maintain focus on activities for appropriate periods of time, for example when a baby was observed imitating to sweep the floor using a cooking spatula, shortly after a member of staff had swept the floor using a brush.
- 2.31 Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and show respect for one another, often helping each other to find things, for example, when a baby found another child's comforter and returned it to the child that he knew it belonged to. Children respond to gentle reminders about how to share things and how to play co-operatively. Prompt and regular attendance is encouraged, and robust procedures are in place to investigate unexpected absences.

### **Personal development**

- 2.32 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 2.33 Extremely effective care practices support children's emotional security and the development of their character, so that children feel safe and happy in a secure environment. Staff respond very well, in a sensitive and caring manner, to individual children's needs. Parents commented to inspectors that they are impressed by the high standard of emotional support given to their child.
- 2.34 Staff encourage children to take appropriate risks both indoors and in the outside area. Children are encouraged to take risks and be adventurous in various activities, such as climbing over wooden logs and uneven surfaces in the nature garden. Gentle reminders, for example to sit on the bed frame and not jump to avoid falling and knocking into others, help children to understand when they might be at risk.
- 2.35 Staff know each child very well. The nurturing key person system helps children form very secure attachments so that they feel safe and happy in the setting and the high standard of care given to each child promotes their well-being and independence most effectively. Children know that they can seek assurance from their key person at any time and they will frequently go straight to them on arrival at the setting. Parents reported to inspectors that they are given the time they need to share information at the beginning and end of the day. They have great confidence in the standard of care offered at the setting.
- 2.36 Staff help children to lead a healthy lifestyle from the very beginning of their time at the setting. They are provided with high quality home-cooked food, fresh drinking water and fruit for snacks. All children have access to outside areas that are well equipped to promote physical activity. Hygiene practices, which are followed by everyone, ensure that the personal needs of the children at this age are met appropriately. Staff encourage older children to understand the importance of handwashing before meals and after outdoor play. Staff follow and promote strict guidelines about the use of mobile phones and photography. All staff give high priority to safeguarding and are aware of their responsibilities to ensure that they meet the EYFS statutory requirements for safeguarding, welfare and learning and development.

2.37 The setting prepares the children for life in Britain through a well embedded programme of cultural events which celebrate diversity. Resources to support this were less evident. All children are offered the same opportunities and experiences. Children are encouraged to take responsibility and learn to care for and respect others, for example babies and toddlers regularly visit a local old peoples' home. British values of fairness, tolerance and kindness towards each other underpin the setting.

### **Leadership and management**

2.38 Leadership and management are outstanding.

2.39 The strong direction from the leadership team results in an enthusiastic and strong team of staff who share an ambitious vision to provide high quality education and exemplary levels of care. They consistently monitor the standards of care and regularly scrutinise the curriculum to ensure that high standards are maintained. They have high expectations of what children under two can achieve.

2.40 Staff are well-qualified; leaders monitor their performance carefully through annual appraisal, supported by an effective system of individual meetings which enable staff to discuss issues, including their own well-being. All staff attend a wide range of professional development courses to ensure that they keep their practice up to date. Leaders know the children very well and respond quickly to the needs of children, including those with SEND. The setting has excellent links with outside agencies through the local authority and can access specialist help if required.

2.41 The setting has strong links with parents. They are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning assessment. In interviews they reported that they are very well informed about the progress their child is making and how they can support this at home. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and comments from interviews with the parents during the inspection, reveal that parents have an extremely positive view of the setting. They are overwhelmingly appreciative of the care their individual children receive from the time they first join the setting.

2.42 The governing body has strong oversight of the setting. It works closely with leadership and management to ensure welfare and safeguarding requirements are implemented effectively by all staff to keep children safe. They offer support and guidance, and they are extremely well-informed about the practice and standards of the setting. More recently, this has included training to ensure that staff are well informed about the new developments within the EYFS. Leadership and management ensure that all staff are updated on matters of child protection, including radicalisation and extremism. They are clear in their responsibility to adhere to the statutory requirements of the EYFS, including wherever possible, all reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of individuals, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements**

**2.43 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

### **Recommendation for further improvement**

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Enable children to strengthen their awareness of other cultures and diversity through a wider range of resources.

### 3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

#### Inspectors

Mrs Loraine Cavanagh	Reporting inspector
Mr Anthony Leggett	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, SoH school)
Mrs Valerie Holloway	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former head of nursery, IAPS school)
Mrs Sally Donaldson	Team inspector for EYFS (Head of kindergarten, HMC school)