



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL AND DAY NURSERY

APRIL 2017



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School's details

Name of School	Berkhampstead School and Day Nursery			
DfE Number	916/6038			
EYFS Number	EY442298			
Registered charity number	325018R			
Address	Berkhampstead School Pittville Circus Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL52 2QA			
Telephone number	01242 523263			
Email address	office@berkhampsteadschool.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Richard Cross			
Proprietor/Chair of governors	Mrs Jane Kent			
Age range	3 months to 11 years			
Number of pupils on roll	407			
	Boys	196	Girls	211
	EYFS	207	Juniors	200
Inspection dates	26 to 27 April 2017			

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.

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 following their inspection 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.

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.

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 an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting 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.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

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 the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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 assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Linda Donowho	Reporting inspector
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former deputy head, IAPS school)
Mrs Angela Russell	Team inspector (Former head pre-prep, IAPS school)
Mrs Anne Camm	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Marcus Gunn	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Berkhampstead Preparatory School and Day Nursery is a co-educational day school for pupils age 3 months to 11 years. The school was founded in 1945 in a residential area of Cheltenham. It now occupies 3 sites in close proximity to each other. The school has 4 distinct sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); the pre-preparatory department; the preparatory department; and the day Nursery, which is adjacent to the school and operates 51 weeks a year. The school is a charitable trust which is administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has added a new outdoor classroom for pupils in the preparatory and pre-preparatory departments to create a space for lessons to be taken outside. This is complemented by a wildlife garden enhancing opportunities for science teaching. All pupils benefit from the improved games facilities. Further improvements have been made in the provision of resources for information and communication technology (ICT).

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a happy, caring and fun environment, which is stimulating and exciting and encourages effort and achievement. It strives to focus on pupils' individual strengths and support 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 to all aspects of school, encourage participation and enjoyment of music, art, drama and competitive sport, and prepare all pupils in such a way that they are able to transfer confidently to the next stage of their education.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of business and professional backgrounds, mostly from the Cheltenham area and villages in the Cotswolds. They are predominantly White British. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils on entry is above average. The school has identified twenty pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), sixteen of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. No pupil has English as an additional language (EAL). More able or talented pupils are catered for in lessons as well as through the extra-curricular activities available.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils have extremely strong literacy and reading skills, and express themselves verbally particularly well.
- Pupils achieve high standards in music and creative arts in response to the school's emphasis on the value of creativity.
- Pupils are notably successful at gaining entry to the senior school of their choice. Many achieve scholarships.
- Pupils are extremely confident at handling numbers and calculations, they relish challenge and regularly collaborate whilst solving problems.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils are highly confident and have strong self-esteem.
- Pupils have a strong appreciation of their own culture and that of others, and show considerable sensitivity towards those less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils treat each other with excellent consideration and respect.
- Pupils take on responsibilities within the school with enthusiasm and maturity and they work together well. However, younger pupils have fewer opportunities to do this.

Recommendation

2.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school may wish to consider the following:

- Provide more opportunities for younger pupils in the preparatory department to take on roles of responsibility and contribute to life in school.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent
- 3.2 Throughout the school, pupils display a positive attitude and an enthusiasm for learning and are determined to give of their best to ensure their success. They are curious, willing to challenge themselves and not afraid to make mistakes, knowing that this is part of the learning process and the school's 'can do' philosophy. This strongly supports the school's aim to provide a learning environment that is stimulating, exciting and varied, where all pupils and staff feel respected and valued and will strive for excellence.
- 3.3 Throughout the school, pupils achieve high standards across the curriculum, building knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning. Children in the EYFS quickly develop strong core skills which they happily apply to their work and play. A key component to their success is their willingness to support and help each other. The school's response to the previous inspection has resulted in outdoor activities embracing all areas of learning.
- 3.4 Pupils respond exceptionally well to the whole-school initiatives of the school's leadership and management, that has focused on the school aims to provide a broad curriculum in which art, music and sport are as important as traditional academic subjects and recognising each pupil as a unique individual, whilst encouraging a strong love of learning. All pupils, including the younger children, are enthusiastic and eager to participate in activities that are made available, and do so with great enjoyment. Pupils achieve extremely well across a wide range of activities. School teams have achieved regional and local success in many areas, particularly in athletics and cricket. Pupils achieve exceptionally well at chess; an activity many greatly enjoy. Pupils succeed highly in art competitions and their achievements in performing arts are outstanding. From a very early age children are introduced to music, which forms an important part of school life. The majority of pupils play at least one instrument and several pupils have gained national choir and orchestral places. Pupils' results in music grades are consistently high, and the numerous opportunities in school for pupils to enjoy participating in ensembles encourage pupils to engage in musical events and festivals in which they are extremely successful. From the Berky Blowers, one of the youngest ensembles, to keyboard ensembles, orchestras and choirs, pupils relish the opportunities provided to sing and perform together. Pupils are notably successful in their entry exams to the schools of their choice, with many gaining scholarships. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the many lively creative and musical activities in which they achieve so highly.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment by the time they leave Year 6 is judged to be above the national average for maintained schools, based on inspection evidence drawn from the observation of lessons, a scrutiny of work, discussions with pupils and examination of school data. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Less-able pupils and those with SEND or EAL make excellent progress because they are extremely well supported and their progress is carefully monitored by the leadership and management. More able pupils respond to the challenges provided in lessons so that they may accelerate their progress. Pupils' achievement benefits from the tracking system which carefully assesses the progress of all pupils in mathematics and English, and staff use this information to ensure that pupils are given appropriate work and support.

- 3.6 Pupils are extremely articulate and confident; they share ideas and listen to each other with respect. Pupils achieve highly because lessons are well planned, ensuring full access to a wide and stimulating range of subjects and activities. Communication skills are excellent throughout the school because staff regularly encourage pupils to think and expand their thoughts. Pupils give thoughtful answers to questions and enjoy debate and discussion. From the EYFS onwards, pupils are enquiring learners. They express their ideas clearly and frequently ask insightful questions to further their knowledge and vocabulary. They use appropriate subject-related vocabulary in lessons. For example, pupils described life as a Roman soldier with sympathetic detail and Reception children enthusiastically described their finds as they explored the school grounds looking for minibeads and flowers. Pupils readily use their increasing language skills to allow them to hypothesise and analyse. In the EYFS, children have mature listening skills; they respond eagerly to instructions from their teacher, and listen courteously to each other and particularly to stories. They use their strong phonic knowledge to read simple sentences and are proud of their achievements. Their successes are regularly acknowledged by their teachers. The mutual respect shown in lessons is a strong feature throughout the school, and pupils respond positively to praise and encouragement.
- 3.7 Pupils write with imagination and enthusiasm, displaying a high level of skills which are encouraged and supported from an early age. When given opportunities to use skills as they move through the school, pupils show a high level of competence. In the EYFS, writing skills are given high priority and pupils respond to expectations extremely well, producing work of a high quality. Older pupils have fewer opportunities to use their well-developed skills. Pupils read with fluency and enthusiasm. This is encouraged from an early age and adds much to their literacy achievements. Teachers consistently encourage pupils to read and enjoy books, and every opportunity is given to encourage a love of literature.
- 3.8 Achievement in mathematics is excellent throughout the school. The foundations for understanding of number are strongly formed in the EYFS and developed throughout the school. Pupils are extremely competent at handling number and calculations. They are adept at solving problems with tenacity and persistence, intent on success. They transfer their knowledge across subjects with ease, particularly in science and geography. All pupils make excellent progress in preparation for challenging Year 6 external entrance examinations.
- 3.9 Pupils understand and apply the principles of scientific investigation and are confident in estimating and predicting findings as seen in their work. From an early age, pupils are confident and highly secure in their use of ICT, and they have an enthusiastic approach to their use of interactive resources. Older pupils' dedicated lessons give them opportunities to develop their skills, which they do successfully.
- 3.10 Pupils have excellent study skills and skilfully use a variety of sources independently to consolidate knowledge because learning resources are made easily available to them by teachers. In a science lesson, older pupils hypothesised collaboratively and effectively about seed dispersal and germination. Their higher order thinking skills are evident when pupils explained what they have learnt and what they found harder to grasp. However, marking does not always guide pupils as to how they can move forward in their learning.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils know their strengths and their weaknesses and demonstrate ability, confidence and willingness to seek support when needed. They are able to evaluate their own need for assistance and they demonstrate their ability to act accordingly thereafter. In the EYFS, children confidently express their feelings and ideas in front of their peers; for example, as they presented their puppet show which they had organised themselves. In interviews, pupils throughout the school said that this confidence supports them in improving their work, assured that their teachers will offer valuable advice and assistance when necessary. Pupils' high self-esteem is further underpinned by the variety of reward systems in place; there are few needs for sanctions. Pupils value the recognition of their achievements as rewards are regularly celebrated during whole-school assemblies. These are for personal achievements and those that benefit the whole school through pupils' personal contributions to school life.
- 4.3 The school leadership, and all adults in school, promote the school's pastoral aims very well. This results in pupils having high self-esteem which is fostered through the citizenship and well-being programme, which prepares them for future challenges and experiences. Pupils know they are listened to and that there is always someone to talk to if they have any concerns.
- 4.4 From the EYFS onwards, pupils take responsibility for their behaviour and understand that their actions may affect others and that poor behaviour has consequences. The Kindness Tree, which depicts pupil's successes, strongly reinforces the whole school philosophy of respect and consideration for others. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the school's expectations and values, and they ably demonstrate these at all times. There exists an air of respect throughout the community of the school, a behaviour valued by all.
- 4.5 Pupils relish the opportunities to take on responsibilities in school including those of monitors, house captains and school council members. Older pupils enjoy the opportunities they are given to support younger pupils. Year 2 pupils enjoy their responsibility for the younger pupils at break times as play leaders. There are, however, fewer opportunities throughout the school for the younger pupils to take on responsibilities. The school council takes their responsibilities seriously, recognising that it is a democratic way for pupils' views and aspirations to be aired and considered. They regularly decide on appropriate charities to support and are proud of their contribution to the design of the outdoor classroom and play area, and to ideas for equipment for it.
- 4.6 Pupils contribute happily to their local community, for example singing in homes for the elderly and in local shopping areas. They enthusiastically take pride in their environment and make a considerable contribution towards the lives of others. They regularly enjoy working to support the needs of others through charity work. They have supported many local and international charities, and in this regard they demonstrate genuine empathy and compassion. An excellent example of this was the Year 5 market where pupils were challenged to decide on a commercial idea to create money either for a charity or for the benefit of the school whereby they had to design, make and market a product to sell to the rest of the school, resulting in a fun activity for all. This added to the delight in supporting the local community.

- 4.7 In the questionnaires, almost all pupils and parents felt that the school promotes British values; democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of what it means to be British, and an appreciation of other cultures and people who are different from themselves. Through the citizenship and well-being curriculum, pupils have a strong appreciation of the positive attributes of community. They show great sensitivity to each other and those less fortunate. Pupils are aware and understand the significance of different religions. For example, they appreciate why certain elements of a synagogue have a special significance and command great reverence, and are also able to compare and contrast different places of worship through regular organised visits locally.
- 4.8 The quality of the pupils' spiritual development is evident throughout the school. The pupils are confident and self-aware. They regularly reflect upon their own achievements and can offer mature, self-critical observations of their behaviour and work when needed. They demonstrate a strong sense of reflection on the non-material aspects of life in assemblies and particularly in the many musical ensembles they engage in. Pupils enjoy the community aspect of sharing their music with others. Pupils' enthusiasm for music is encouraged by their participation in an eclectic choice made by the staff. The high quality of art on display around the school demonstrates the pupils' appreciation of beauty and their capacity to think beyond day-to-day issues.
- 4.9 Pupils are aware that decisions they make affect their future lives. For example, from the EYFS onwards, pupils know how to keep safe. Pupils are advised about and given opportunities to discuss safety issues. They are aware of how to keep safe when using computers and are confident that, if they have any concerns, there is a member of staff to turn to. The regular reminders and specialist speakers reinforce pupils' safety. Pupils understand the need to stay fit and healthy. Regular exercise is paramount in school activities and the school ensures that it is regular and enjoyable.