



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION**

**BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL AND DAY NURSERY**

**APRIL 2017**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Berkhampstead School and Day Nursery			
<b>DfE Number</b>	916/6038			
<b>EYFS Number</b>	EY442298			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	325018R			
<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>Proprietor/Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Jane Kent			
<b>Age range</b>	3 months to 11 years			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	407			
	<b>Boys</b>	196	<b>Girls</b>	211
	<b>EYFS</b>	207	<b>Juniors</b>	200
<b>Pupils' ability</b>	The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils on entry is above average.			
<b>Pupils' needs</b>	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is twenty, of these, sixteen need support with their reading. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. No pupils have English as an additional language (EAL).			
<b>History of the school</b>	Berkhampstead is a co-educational day school for pupils aged 3 months to 11 years. Founded in 1945 in a residential area of Cheltenham, it now occupies 3 sites in close proximity to each other.			
<b>Ownership and governing structure</b>	The school operates as a charitable trust, which is administered by a board of governors.			

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<b>School structure</b>	The school has 4 distinct sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); the pre-preparatory department; the preparatory department; and a day Nursery, adjacent to the school, that operates 51 weeks a year.
<b>Other useful information</b>	The headmaster is responsible for the whole school. The day Nursery has a manager who is responsible for its daily running.
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25 to 26 April 2017

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## 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. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or 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 and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

**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. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils’ health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents’ complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management.] The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## SUMMARY EVALUATION

**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

The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

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.

**The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### PART 2

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

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

**The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

### PART 3

#### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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.

**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

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

**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**

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their 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.

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

## **PART 6**

### **Provision of information**

A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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 those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, 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.

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

## **PART 7**

### **Manner in which complaints are handled**

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.

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

## **PART 8**

### **Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

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.

**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**

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.

The learning and care which the setting provides meets the needs of the range of children who attend highly effectively. All children make rapid progress from their starting points and are very well prepared for the transition to the next stage in their education. Staff meet regularly to evaluate the progress of each child, monitor their welfare and further develop the curriculum. Children's personal and emotional development is excellent and they feel very secure, safe and happy. Members of staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements and fulfil their responsibility for protecting children in their care diligently.

Since the last inspection the system of supervision to improve staff performance has been fully embedded and the outside areas have been enhanced to allow more opportunities for physical development, thus meeting the recommendations of the previous report. Strong leadership with a clear vision for the future ensures that the setting demonstrates highly evaluative practice, securing continuous improvement that improves children's life chances.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a clear vision for development of the setting, identifying what they want to do to continually improve practice. As a result, staff have high expectations of what babies and children under two can achieve, and provide high standards of care and educational provision. Governance of the setting is strong and works closely with leadership and management to ensure that welfare and safeguarding requirements are implemented effectively and are rigorously adhered to by all members of staff.

Practitioners are well qualified and their performance is regularly monitored by annual appraisals and supported with a formal system of regular supervisions. These are very effective and enable staff to discuss issues and identify solutions as they arise. Staff attend regular professional development courses to ensure that they regularly update their practice. Areas for development are identified through a collaborative process, and prioritised for implementation. However, the development plan is not yet formalised and the new initiatives are not yet fully evaluated in order to ensure their impact on the outcomes for the children. Since the previous inspection, the outside area has been improved and provides good opportunities to extend children's physical development.

In discussion with inspectors and in the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were extremely positive about the setting, the progress their children make and the prompt way any concerns are responded to. The school takes effective and appropriate action in response to parental suggestions. Parents feel welcomed into the school community. They say they are well informed about the setting and that the staff know their children extremely well. They value the daily contact they have with very approachable staff.

The curriculum is very well planned and meets the relevant statutory requirements as well as the needs and interests of the children and provides an excellent start to their education. The education programmes provide many opportunities for children to increase their language and communication skills, to develop physical skills and to support their personal, social and emotional development.

Staff actively promote equality, diversity and British values. Excellent role modelling by staff of expected norms of behaviour enable children to become confident learners and show respect to one another.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.

The well-qualified staff have an excellent understanding of the requirements of the EYFS and how young children learn. Detailed planning shows that staff have high expectations of what each child can achieve in relation to their ages and stages of development. Staff respond extremely well to children's differing needs, knowing when to intervene to move the learning on with appropriately planned activities. Detailed assessment information, including the daily routines, and likes and dislikes of each child, is gathered on entry into the setting. This is used effectively as a starting point so that children settle quickly into the activities, enabling them to make progress. Regular assessments recorded in the children's individual detailed learning journey contribute to staff's knowledge about what each child can do and what the next steps will be. Positive feedback to children from staff through very good use of praise and encouragement help the children to acquire the skills and capacity to develop and learn effectively. The excellent partnership with parents is a strength of the setting and enables them to be fully involved in their children's learning. They particularly appreciate the opportunities to be involved in their children's learning including being able to contribute to the assessment process through WOW notes. They receive regular updates from staff about the progress being made and how they can support learning at home.

Equality and diversity are promoted effectively through the provision of suitable resources and by celebrations of different cultural events such as Thanksgiving and St Patrick's Day. Well-established routines to encourage independence and confidence, and sensitively handled transitions help prepare children for the next stage in their learning.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children is outstanding.

Very warm and caring relationships between children and staff foster a positive culture and sense of belonging across the setting. All staff are very supportive and encouraging of the children's own efforts.

Children are sensitively encouraged to try things for themselves and experiment. For example, a baby was shown how to bang a drum and he then picked up other objects to use as drum sticks, showing great delight in the sounds he created. Children take risks within a safe environment and develop confidence and succeed, as observed when a child conquered her fears about riding on a tricycle. Children show great enjoyment and pleasure as they investigate and make choices, often selecting their own toys to play with. They particularly enjoy recognising their own faces on the visual register.

Transition to the next room is considered carefully, ensuring that children feel emotionally secure and ready for the move. Highly effective strategies including detailed handover notes are used to support this. Physical and emotional health is given high priority and children readily seek comfort from staff. Personal hygiene routines are well embedded and followed carefully by everyone. A healthy lifestyle is promoted through the provision of home-cooked food, fresh drinking water and fruit for snacks. Access to greatly improved outside areas for exercise, including more resources to develop gross motor skills, further enhance the provision and add to the children's understanding of the need to be healthy.

Systems for registration and tracking absence ensure high levels of attendance and that children are duly accounted for. Staff ensure that children do not have access to social media, and strict guidelines about the use of photography in the setting are in place

Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and respect for each other, often helping one another to fetch things or joining in applause to celebrate each other's successes. Good manners are encouraged at all times, especially at meal times. All babies and toddlers are encouraged to express their feelings, often using a pictorial feelings board, and practitioners will explain gently when reactions are inappropriate and how they could better respond. The under two's developing understanding that they are part of a wider community is enabled, for example by their participation in sponsored toddler walks.

## **Outcomes for children**

Outcomes for children are outstanding.

The setting is highly successful in meeting its aims to provide a happy, caring and fun environment where children feel safe to try new experiences and to provide an environment where all children feel included, respected and valued.

Babies, with support from adults, are able to clap to rhymes and shake instruments. They have started to manipulate a paint brush and can mark-make using their fingers to create spring flowers and decorate shamrocks. The toddlers select books and respond to stories with enjoyment, often repeating words. They were observed choosing and taking turns to pick songs from a box containing the words. They enjoyed investigating the properties of soil and flour. They demonstrated growing levels of physical control when transferring flour into a bowl. Both babies and toddlers begin counting activities during snack time, which is built on through other activities, and the older toddlers were confidently able to share the fruit out.

Children make rapid progress relative to their starting points, abilities and needs, with the majority reaching and some exceeding the expected levels of development for their age. Well-planned interventions for those with SEND or EAL support their learning so that all make rapid progress. Children are very enthusiastic learners who are keen to explore their surroundings and use their imagination. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Compliance with statutory requirements**

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

## **Recommendation for further improvement**

- Ensure that the new initiatives introduced as a result of self-evaluation of the setting are fully evaluated for their impact on the outcomes for children.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The inspectors observed conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with members of staff, senior leaders and with the chair of governors. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Linda Donowho	Reporting inspector
Mr Guy Cowper	Compliance team inspector (Director of operations, Society of Heads school)
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former deputy head, IAPS school)
Mrs Angela Russell	Team inspector for early years (Former head pre-prep IAPS school)