

# Hampstead Hill School

St Stephens Hall, Pond Street, Hampstead, London, NW3 2PP

**Inspection dates** 2–4 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good school because

- Pupils love to come to school. Their behaviour and personal development are outstanding and they thrive in the welcoming, nurturing environment.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well owing to good quality teaching. Teachers motivate pupils well and so they are eager to do their best. They acquire very good English and mathematical skills.
- The leadership and management have ensured that teaching and achievement are good. Leaders are clear about what they need to do next to raise the quality of teaching and achievement to the highest standard.
- Leaders ensure that all Year 2 pupils gain a place at a school of their choice.
- The principal, who is also the proprietor, has ensured that all the Independent School Standards are met.
- Early years provision is good. Children have a positive start to their education.
- The very close attention given to the pupils' safety, welfare and personal development helps pupils to feel safe, make friends and develop into confident individuals. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and meet requirements.
- Parents and carers hold the school and the Principal in very high regard.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Checks on the quality of teaching are not yet frequent enough to drive forward and sustain more rapid improvement.
- The system for making checks on the quality of teachers' marking has not been fully implemented.
- Not all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are encouraged well enough to be creative in the activities which they freely choose for themselves.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was undertaken with one day’s notice.
- The inspectors observed 28 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were joint observations with the heads of year groups.
- Meetings were held with the school's leaders, teaching staff and pupils. A range of documentation was examined, including policies, assessment records, the curriculum and teachers’ plans and procedures for keeping pupils’ safe. The inspectors heard pupils read and looked at their written and other work. The inspectors observed pupils at break and ate lunch with them.
- The views expressed by 61 members of staff through survey questionnaires were considered. There were 41 responses to Ofsted’s ‘Parent View’ survey which were also considered. A very large number of parents and carers contacted the inspectors about the impact the school has had on their children and 25 sent emails.

## Inspection team

Jill Bainton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Teresa Kiely	Additional Inspector
Angela Podmore	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Hampstead Hill School is a non-selective independent school for boys and girls aged from three to eight years.
- The school is also a childcare provider registered with Ofsted Early Years for children from two- to-three years of age. Some of the children aged two-to-three years attend part-time.
- The school was originally founded in 1949 but registered under its current name in 1980. The Principal is the sole proprietor.
- It occupies part of St Stephen's Church and an adjoining school hall. This is located on the southern edge of Hampstead Heath in North West London. There are currently 271 pupils on roll with 152 children in the early years setting who are aged from three to five years of age and all are all full-time.
- Pupils come a variety of backgrounds, including a number whose first language is not English. A small number of pupils have additional learning needs. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has three main class groups: three-to-four-year olds (Pre-Reception), four-to-five-year old (Reception) and those in the upper school aged from five to eight years of age. The school had its last inspection in 2008, which was a light touch inspection and a childcare inspection in February 2011. This inspection is only for the pupils aged from three to eight years of age.
- The school uses a local sports hall and swimming pool for physical education. It has no specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs or any off-site unit.
- The school receives no additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- The school's aim is, 'the total development of each child's personality and talents' so that they are able to stand squarely on their own feet, confident of who they are, where they are going and of the excitement and enjoyment of it all.'

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the role of the heads of year, including leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage, in order to raise the quality of teaching and pupils achievement by:
  - establishing fully effective systems to regularly check on the quality of teaching and for performance management to ensure they are of the highest standard
  - fully implementing the system for checking on the quality and effectiveness of teachers' marking
  - ensuring that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are encouraged to be more creative in the activities which they freely choose for themselves.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The leadership and management of the school are good. The Principal is ambitious for the school and its pupils. She has ensured, alongside her senior leaders, that the school is well organised and pupils are carefully nurtured. This good leadership, together with a well-planned curriculum and effective teaching, enables the pupils to behave outstandingly and to achieve well.
- A restructuring of the management since the last inspection resulted in the recent appointment of a group of heads of years as middle leaders. These staff are still new to their posts and have yet to fully develop their roles and implement actions to show their effectiveness in raising the quality of teaching. The senior management team, which now includes these heads of year, has devised a detailed school improvement plan which, alongside the school's own review of its performance, identifies the right areas for improvement. Senior leaders know that they need to develop the skills of the heads of year to enable them to fully check on the quality of teaching and to support the management of staff performance so they have the maximum impact on raising achievement.
- All members of staff agree that they are proud to be working at the school. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. Many took the time to contact the inspectors either in person or by email. This shows how much they value the school and the very positive impact it has on their children. They made comments such as, 'I cannot emphasise enough what a nurturing environment the school provides...my children enjoy school enormously.....Can I share 'the love' of Hampstead Hill School with you?.....my child loves to learn and is doing so well.'
- Staff ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted. For example, pupils learn about how democracy works through the school council. Many visits outside school, for example, to the local library, galleries and museums along with visiting speakers, assist the pupils in their growing awareness of the diversity of the wider world and life in modern Britain.
- Leaders check on how well pupils are doing and their behaviour and attendance at the off-site provision at a local sports hall and swimming pool.
- The curriculum, which has been revised to reflect recent national changes, is suitable for the age range. It is suitably broad and balanced and includes work on history and geography. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, especially in English and mathematics. This work also prepares them well for entrance examinations especially in these key subjects.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils are kept safe and the school meets current safeguarding requirements. The school follows safer recruitment procedures for staff appointments. The premises and accommodation provide a safe and attractive learning environment. All the required information, including a suitable complaints procedure, is made available to parents and carers.
- Leaders have ensured that all the regulations in the Independent School Standards have been met.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The principal is fully involved in the day-to-day running of the school and is very well informed about all aspects of its work.
  - She has appointed well-qualified and enthusiastic staff who are assisting her in driving the school forward. She is involved at every level in the management of the school and is well informed about the quality of the teaching, staff pay and performance and pupils' achievement.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their attendance is very high and they arrive eager to begin their school day. They mix very well together at break and lunch times and thoroughly enjoy their school life. Their enjoyment of school was confirmed by very many parents and carers.
- Pupils say they have no concerns about bullying. The recent discussions during an anti-bullying month led to pupils writing perceptive comments about why some pupils may bully others. In personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons pupils discuss what attributes they needed to become a good friend and others make flowers to place in a friendship garden. Pupils make perceptive comments on friendship, such as, 'being a kind friend is listening...thinking before you speak so you do not upset your friend.'
- Pupils are gaining very good social skills. They learn to take turns in sharing their views and ideas and make lively and confident contributions to discussions. Lunch is a very sociable occasion, where very

wholesome food is served. Pupils sit and chat together and display very good manners. Through the daily responsibilities they take on, such as class monitors and lunchtime helpers, they learn how to be responsible citizens even at a young age.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they can always go to their teacher if they need help. Staff are always on hand to ensure that any even small concerns are dealt with immediately. The senior staff are a very active presence around the school.
- The school ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their welfare, health and safety are promoted well and that all staff are checked for their suitability to work with children.
- Detailed risk assessments on the premises and for activities both on and off site are completed. These include checks on pupils' behaviour and safety at the local sports and swimming venues which older pupils use.
- Pupils gain an increasing knowledge of their own and other cultures, beliefs and ways of life through personal, social and health education, history and art lessons and through varied work in the early years setting. Racial harmony is effectively promoted as staff assist pupils' in their growing awareness of those from backgrounds different from their own. They learn about English services and institutions through outside visits and school events, such as the Christmas 'Jumper Day' during the inspection to raise money for charity.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupil's learning and achievement are good as a result of effective teaching. Pupils make good progress over time, including in English and mathematics and in their personal development. Pupils are eager to learn and engage in their work in lessons.
- Planned learning activities, especially in English including that for reading, writing and speaking and in mathematics are given a strong emphasis and help prepare the pupils very well for the next stage of their education.
- Most staff organise their lessons well. Leaders intend to share the expertise of more experienced staff with newly trained staff, for example, in the planning of lessons to improve the quality of teaching. Relationships between staff and pupils and the pupils themselves are very positive and are a key factor in the pupils' success and enjoyment of school.
- Pupils are motivated to learn and keen to answer questions in lessons. They confirm that school is fun and they enjoy learning. There is a purposeful learning atmosphere in class, for example, with pupils focusing on the tasks set and engaging in discussions. Most pupils are very articulate and express themselves very well for their age. Pupils learning English as an additional language make rapid progress in improving their skills in English.
- Most staff mark the pupils' work regularly using a recently devised marking policy. Pupils confirm that this helps them saying for example, 'It makes my English work better.'
- Pupils' skills are carefully checked when pupils enter each key stage to find out what they know and can do. This process helps teachers to provide work at the correct level. Teachers use questioning well in lessons to check how well the pupils are learning new skills and gaining a clear understanding of the concepts being taught. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils were challenged to solve problems using numerical signs and could confidently explain the process they were using to find their answers.
- A wide range of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), are used well to provide activities which inspire the pupils to enjoy their learning.
- Teaching assistants provide effective help in the classrooms, supporting specific groups of pupils and helping the lesson to run smoothly by preparing suitable additional resources.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- All pupils achieve well, including the children in the early years setting, as a result of good teaching, an appropriate curriculum and the supportive learning atmosphere in the school. Some Year 2 pupils make exceptional progress in English and mathematics in exceeding national expectations for their age early on in the school year.
- This good progress is evident in the quality of work in pupils' books, observations of their learning in lessons and in the school's own information about each pupil's progress. The school assess pupils very regularly, both formally and informally using both teacher assessments and by making national

comparisons. The information gathered is used well to track each pupil's progress and identify those who may need additional help. Parents and carers are kept very well informed through regular meetings and detailed written reports.

- The school use effective strategies to help pupils to read and write. Pupils confirm that they love to write stories. Examples seen both in books and around the school are imaginative, well constructed and well-presented. Pupils are encouraged to present their work very neatly and accurately using well-formed cursive handwriting, which they practise daily. Older pupils develop good levels of speed and legibility which enhances their confidence as written communicators. They take a pride in their work. Their listening skills develop very well alongside their speaking skills. Pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, for example, by listening to the views of other class members and sharing of ideas.
- The older pupils take part in physical education activities including swimming using local facilities. The school staff confirm that they are eager to attend, behave very well and make good progress.
- The small number of pupils with special educational needs who require additional help are identified at an early stage and well supported both individually and in class by a specialist staff. Their needs are met and so they are able to do well.
- The more able pupils are challenged in various ways to reach their full potential. For example, in an English lesson they were encouraged to extend their skills still further using ICT, sharing their research findings with other pupils and in reporting these back to the class.
- Year 2 pupils are very well prepared for the selective entrance examinations for their next school. Parents and carers confirm that the Principal gives them excellent advice on their choice of school. All pupils are successful in gaining a place at one of their chosen schools.

### The early years provision

### is good

- The early years provision is good. Children enter the school with varying levels of knowledge and skills, but generally this is at or above what is typical for their age. They make good progress across all the areas of learning and development, and particularly in their confident speaking and listening skills, reading, writing and mathematical skills. They enter Year 1 very well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- All children make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teachers identify and promptly support those who need more help; they also know how to extend the skills of those who are learning very quickly. Children who speak English as an additional language develop their language skills rapidly because they are encouraged and supported to speak with confidence.
- There is a rigorous assessment system in place. There are regular checks on the progress of children. Parents say that they regularly receive information about how well their children are doing. They find the teachers very helpful and supportive when discussing their children's learning.
- Children's attitudes to learning are outstanding. The children are supported by very strong nurturing relationships with the staff. They show that they want to learn and learn equally well when they are working in a small group or when they are working by themselves. For example, when children were practising early reading and writing skills, some are able to write whole words on their own and others are able to make words using letters and sounds they already know. They also get on very well together and enjoy learning with their friends. Children are kept safe and secure in the school. They are very well supervised at all times.
- Children enjoy learning. However, they are not encouraged as much as they might be to be more creative in the activities which they freely choose for themselves.
- The leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because the setting's leaders reflect well on their work with children. They have identified how they wish to improve the setting and make children's learning the best it can be. They have recently been appointed as members of the heads of years group.
- The provision meets all requirements and the school ensure that all the regulations related to children's welfare health and safety are met and that both their academic and personal development are good.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100073
<b>Inspection number</b>	452079
<b>DfE registration number</b>	202/6264

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Day school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 8 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	271
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Andrea Taylor
<b>Principal</b>	Andrea Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 November 2008
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£14,190-£15,015
<b>Telephone number</b>	0207 4356262
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@hampsteadhillschool.co.uk



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