

Heathside Preparatory School

16 New End, Hampstead, London NW3 1JA

Inspection dates

19–21 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Not all the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools are met.
- The proprietor has not ensured that leaders are organised, or communicate effectively with staff, parents and carers. Staff do not know other people's roles and responsibilities in the organisation. Job descriptions are unclear, and key information is not readily available.
- Teaching requires improvement. This is because pupils, especially in the upper school, are not sufficiently challenged.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. In the upper school, there is some low-level disruption because of weaknesses in teaching.
- Outcomes require improvement. Pupils in the upper school do not make the progress that they should, particularly in writing.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils benefit from a rich range of activities and cultural opportunities.
- Parents are supportive of the school ethos and the positive impact it has on their child's development and confidence.
- The boarding provision is good.
- The early years is good. All the requirements of the early years statutory framework are met, and children make good progress.
- Pupils make stronger progress in the lower and middle schools.
- Safeguarding is effective in the school and the boarding provision.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management to ensure that:
 - the proprietor, the advisory board and the senior leaders work to bring staff and parents together with a common purpose so that the school community can move on from past events
 - the proprietor and advisory board provide appropriate support and challenge, and hold leaders to account
 - leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge over time
 - the advisory board and/or the proprietor take responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the boarding provision
 - there is capacity and suitable working arrangements in the senior leadership team to sustain improvements
 - health information on the central records is accessible, regularly updated and verified
 - communication with parents is effective so that they know what is happening at the school and know who to contact for information, or if they have concerns
 - communication and information sharing with staff is effective, so that they are informed and can contribute to the school's development
 - all staff and leaders know their job descriptions, and there are clear, transparent procedures for monitoring performance and reviewing job descriptions
 - all staff and leaders have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities within the organisation, and know who to refer to for information or guidance
 - there are clear procedures for ensuring continuity for pupils in terms of their learning and behaviour expectations when there are staff changes.
- Improve teaching and outcomes for pupils, particularly in the upper school, by ensuring that teachers plan work at the right level to challenge pupils and improve their confidence in writing.
- Improve pupils' behaviour in lessons in the upper school, by ensuring that teachers plan and deliver suitable activities so that pupils stay focused on their learning.
- Good practice recommendations in relation to the boarding provision:
 - improve management oversight of recording in relation to healthcare plans so that information is regularly updated and readily accessible to teaching and boarding staff
 - ensure that boarding staff have clear job descriptions for their roles and responsibilities
 - improve links between the school's health and well-being team and the boarding provision
 - ensure that staff are trained to apply the behaviour management policy consistently.
- The school must meet the independent school standards and national minimum standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision	Requires improvement
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the boarding provision	Good

- Leadership and management require improvement. Leadership is disorganised, and systems to hold leaders and staff to account are ineffective. There are weaknesses in the way leaders communicate with staff and parents.
- The senior leaders and consultants who have joined the school are successful in ensuring that the school now meets the standards relating to health and safety, welfare, checks on the suitability of staff and the premises. These are the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools. However, some of the leadership standards in the school and the boarding provision are not met.
- Working practice and procedures to ensure that improvements are sustained are not strong enough. For example, the school organisation diagram for the upper school is incomplete. It does not include staff surnames, or give useful information about roles. The assistant principal is not on the organisation diagram. There is confusion about job descriptions because they are not kept up to date, so staff do not know if they are asking the right person. Staff based on one site are not clear if their role extends to other sites or not. For example, school staff in the health and well-being team do not have formal arrangements in place to provide direction, support or supervision. Inspectors heard conflicting accounts about their roles and responsibilities. It is not clear who is responsible for ensuring that health questionnaires provided by parents are uploaded on to the school's central records.
- The proprietor and other senior leaders do not consistently demonstrate the leadership skills necessary to bring members of the school community together with a common purpose and move on from past decisions and events. For example, the school breached its registration by implementing a key stage 4 without permission from the registration authority. As a result, pupils and staff have left the school. This has been very unsettling for everyone. Nevertheless, leaders now need to take responsibility for this, heal the bitterness and ill feeling, and support all members of the school community to move forward.
- Overall, staff are positive about the school. They acknowledge the improvements made by new leaders and recognise the school's strengths. However, they are clear when things do not work well. At present, some staff feel isolated and undervalued by leaders. There is confusion about how decisions are made and communicated. For example, subject leaders in the upper school are not familiar with the school organisation diagram. They do not know who is responsible for supporting them to improve teaching and learning. When colleagues leave, it is unclear how or why others take on acting roles.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. A large number of parents responded to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, and spoke to inspectors. The majority of parents who responded were positive about their child's experience. They value the proprietor's

educational vision, and recognise the positive impact of the school's ethos on their child's development and learning. However, these same parents could also identify disarray in leadership and significant weaknesses in the way leaders communicate with them. One parent commented, succinctly and typical of many, 'Happy child, chaotic management.'

- Leaders' monitoring and leadership of teaching are in the early stages of development. There is a process for lesson observations and work scrutiny, but this does not operate smoothly on all sites. The process for monitoring teaching is more effective on the lower and middle school sites. This is because staffing is more stable, and middle leaders are more actively engaged in the process.
- Staff turnover, particularly on the upper school site, has had a negative impact on the pupils' learning and behaviour. There is a lack of continuity in teaching and expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. The situation is exacerbated by the weaknesses in communication.
- There are some notable strengths in leadership in the school and in the boarding provision. The curriculum gives pupils access to a wide range of subjects, experiences and learning, including debating, ceramics and a wide range of languages. In Year 5, pupils led and performed an assembly in Mandarin.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. This had a positive impact on their personal development. Pupils know about, and have respect for, other faiths, groups within the range of protected characteristics, and other cultures. For example, in the middle school, pupils study Japanese culture in depth, including traditional and contemporary art and animation.
- Recent changes to the leadership of the boarding provision has brought about significant improvements. Boarding staff speak highly of this aspect of the school's leadership and said they are well supported. Boarding staff, parents and boarders describe the boarding provision as organised, well managed and safe.
- The head of boarding is visible and accessible to boarders and staff. He knows the boarders well, and prioritises their safety and well-being. He has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the service. However, the head of boarding is also a deputy headteacher in the school. This ensures that links between education and boarding are strong, but also creates a high workload.
- The school nurse and school counsellor are not involved in the boarding provision. This is a missed opportunity to enhance practice and develop the service to promote the health and well-being of boarding pupils.
- The boarding provision has a positive culture of celebrating diversity and difference.
- Boarding pupils are well behaved. They get on well with staff and each other. They reported feeling safe and well cared for. The boarding staff manage behaviour well. Boarding pupils know what is expected of them, and describe the rules as being 'fair'.
- The school's behaviour management policy describes how staff should respond to incidents that require physical intervention. Boarding staff have not undertaken any recent training in relation to the safe use of physical intervention. In practice, staff manage incidents without the use of physical intervention.
- The physical environment is safe and secure. The head of boarding completes risk assessments to identify possible risks and hazards and leaders take action to reduce risk

and to reduce risks around the building, and when boarders are out on trips and activities.

- Leaders have addressed shortfalls in boarding, identified at the previous inspections, and these improvements are now firmly embedded in practice. There are systems in place to ensure that boarding pupils can contact staff during the night, in the event of an emergency.

The school's progress towards meeting standards that were not met at the previous inspection

- The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned Ofsted to carry out a progress monitoring inspection as part of this standard inspection. The standards relating to pupils' welfare and the premises are met. The standards relating to leadership and management are unmet.

Governance

- The proprietor has not successfully held senior leaders to account. This is because the processes to do so are not clearly understood, formalised or documented. This leads to confusion and misunderstanding, and limits the school's improvement. The proprietor intends to review job descriptions and delegate responsibility, but this has not happened. However, the senior team now meets regularly, and meetings are minuted.
- There are no formal arrangements in place for the advisory board or proprietor to monitor the effectiveness of the boarding provision. The newly appointed board has not made a significant impact, and there is no dedicated person to focus on the boarding provision.
- The chair of the new governance and safeguarding advisory board is highly experienced, with wide knowledge of educational matters. The proprietor and other board members share a strong vision for the future of the school and have developed a school improvement plan with senior leaders, which has been shared with staff. Board members have a broad range of relevant expertise and skills. During the inspection, members identified many of the same concerns as the wider parent body. For example, the quality of leaders' communication with parents and the consequences of the rapid expansion of the school. However, it is too soon for the advisory board to have had any impact on these key issues.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The improvements in safeguarding practice have been sustained. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is knowledgeable and experienced. Other leaders are fully qualified in safeguarding matters. Staff in the middle, lower and upper schools are confident about their training, and how to apply it. The range of concerns recorded indicates that staff understand their responsibilities to pass on concerns.
- The head of boarding is one of the deputy designated safeguarding leads for the school. He ensures that boarding staff are vigilant and responsive to any welfare concerns.
- As in the progress monitoring inspection in January, leaders' record-keeping of concerns and actions taken is effective. Leaders respond to concerns, which may include behaviour and bullying issues, as well as child protection, appropriately. Leaders follow up concerns

promptly with the local authority, and attend relevant meetings.

- Staff, including boarding staff, are recruited in line with safe recruiting practice to ensure that they are suitable to work with children and young people.
- Staff prioritise the safety and well-being of boarding pupils. They are suitably trained in key areas of child protection, and provide high levels of support and supervision for boarders.
- The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is available to parents on the school's website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. This is because there are weaknesses in planning and the level of challenge for pupils in the upper school. There is a lack of continuity arising from staff changes and weaknesses in leaders' responses and communication. This means that pupils do not make good progress. In the lower and middle schools, teachers' planning is more effective; as a result, pupils make stronger progress.
- Teachers are well qualified and have strong subject knowledge. Across the school, they are committed to helping pupils to achieve their best. They devise a range of activities to help children learn, such as using mind maps and presentations. In a Year 4 class, pupils created their own 'haiku' poems as part of the Japanese cultural project.
- Teachers have strong questioning skills in a range of subjects. They ask a wide range of questions, which enable pupils to think and deepen their understanding. Pupils explore ideas well in speaking, but are sometimes less confident about committing these in writing.
- Teachers show pupils how to learn well. They demonstrate skills and how to approach activities effectively so that pupils can succeed. For example, in Year 7 ceramics, the teacher demonstrated skills of scoring and applying 'slip' to clay to mould their piece. This enabled pupils to develop skills quickly.
- Leaders have reviewed the way the school assesses pupils' progress, and changes are in the process of being phased in across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and school life. There are good relationships between staff and pupils, which contribute to a positive learning ethos across the school. Pupils and parents commented on the kind and friendly atmosphere in the school.
- Pupils are confident; they enjoy the range of activities and extra-curricular events, and participate fully in the cultural life of the school.
- Pupils know about the protected characteristics and the importance of respect for all groups of people.

- Pupils gain a range of social and leadership skills. The school fosters pupils' independence well. Pupils take the lead in raising money for charities, and suggest activities such as 'crazy hair day', as well as traditional cake sales.
- Pupils say there is very little bullying and that any incidents are dealt with promptly by adults. Pupils take safety very seriously. They know about stranger danger and how to keep themselves safe on the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons in the upper school is not as strong as their behaviour in the lower and middle schools. Pupils are sometimes distracted in lessons. For example, they lose concentration, fidget, swing back on chairs and call out. This is because of the inconsistencies in teachers' planning and in the way they apply the behaviour policy.
- Leaders have not been successful in ensuring that high expectations of behaviour are maintained in the upper school. Teachers' expectations of behaviour vary, and this makes it hard for teachers to apply the behaviour policy consistently. This is supported by inspection evidence from pupils.
- In the lower and middle schools, pupils behave well in lessons. Work captures pupils' imagination and engages them in learning. Pupils respond well to adults' instructions.
- Pupils across the age range generally conduct themselves well around the school. They respond well to teachers' instructions, and can manage their own behaviour. Supervision ratios of staff to pupils are appropriate. However, staff do not interact with pupils as much as they could in the upper school.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with national figures. Staff have worked effectively to improve pupils' attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement. Pupils in the upper school make less progress than they should because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. This is a result of weaknesses in leadership and the turnover of teaching staff. Pupils in the lower and middle schools make stronger progress across a range of subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make less progress in the upper school. This is because of the impact of changes in leadership. The leadership of special educational needs is not well established, and it is difficult for staff to get up-to-date information about pupils' needs.
- Pupils with SEND make more progress in the lower and middle schools. This is because teachers have had more specific training from the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Teachers know about pupils' learning needs and use this information to plan appropriate work. The support from specialist therapists has a positive impact on outcomes for this group of pupils.
- Pupils' speaking and performance skills are well developed. Pupils are articulate and confident to ask questions. They learn how to debate and express their own point of view in discussions, and enjoy participating in performance. In the middle school, Year 5 pupils

confidently staged a performance of 'Aladdin' to younger pupils.

- Pupils' writing in the upper school is below expectations, and does not match with pupils' attainment in speaking. Pupils' written responses lack depth and quality in expressive writing, basic grammatical structures, accuracy and choice of vocabulary.
- There is an effective careers programme to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. Pupils transfer to a range of different schools to continue their education.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of the early years is effective, although the leadership and management of the school overall require improvement. This is because the early years leader is established in her post and has an extensive and detailed knowledge of the requirements of the early years statutory framework. This guides her work and that of the staff, and has a positive impact on children's learning, development and well-being. All the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage are met.
- The learning environment is vibrant and stimulating. Adults engage well with children, guiding and challenging them, asking questions and enabling them to express themselves. Children enjoy a wide range of activities, where they can learn both independently and collaboratively with others.
- Adults use assessment well to identify the priorities for each child's development. They understand how to observe children, assess their needs and plan their next steps. Adults design a range of challenging and imaginative activities for children. These enable children to apply their writing and numerical knowledge in a variety of contexts.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained, share information effectively and make sure that children are well looked after. Children are happy and keen to learn.
- Children make good progress from their starting points, and are well prepared for Year 1. In 2018, the school's assessment information indicated that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was above the national average. Inspection evidence shows that children make good progress across all the areas of learning, particularly in their physical development, communication and language.
- The outdoor area on the lower school site is limited in space but has been well designed to provide a suitable range of activities for children. Children also have access to Hampstead Heath for recreation and learning.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision

Good

- Boarding pupils build secure and trusting relationships with the boarding staff. They enjoy their time in boarding and several described it as being 'like a family'.
- Parents speak highly of the boarding provision. For example, one parent said that boarding helped her son make huge progress in terms of his confidence and emotional well-being.
- Boarding pupils enjoy a wide range of activities in the boarding provision and the local community. They go to the cinema, a local trampoline centre and attend after-school

homework clubs. They value the opportunity to socialise with each other and have fun.

- Boarding staff provide a variety of ways for boarding pupils to share their views. There is a suggestion box, regular boarders' meetings, and several boarding pupils are on the school council. Staff listen to their views and use them to make changes to the service.
- The physical environment is comfortable, clean and 'homely'. There is enough space for boarding pupils to relax, study and play. Most boarding pupils reported that they like the food on offer. Some of them were less positive, and did not appreciate the school and boarding policy of not eating meat.
- Boarding pupils benefit from healthy routines and are encouraged to make healthy lifestyle choices. The boarding staff ensure that they have access to healthcare when they need it. The school system for managing health information is not robust. It took several hours for staff to locate the parents' health questionnaire for one boarding pupil. This creates some risk that health problems could be missed. But, in practice, staff know the boarders well. They have the training and information they need to respond to health needs.

School details

Unique reference number	100078
Social care unique reference number	1280475
DfE registration number	202/6360
Inspection number	10095013

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	2 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	493
Number of part-time pupils	18
Number of boarders on roll	21
Proprietor	Remus White Ltd
Headteacher	Melissa Remus Elliot
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,000 to £18,600
Annual fees (boarders)	There are no additional fees for boarding
Telephone number	020 3058 4011
Website	www.heathsideprep.co.uk
Email address	info@heathsideprep.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–21 September 2017

Information about this school

- Heathside Preparatory School is an independent boarding school for girls and boys in the London Borough of Camden. The school is registered for up to 600 pupils between the ages of two to 14. There are currently 493 pupils on roll. The school opened a boarding provision in January 2018 for boys and girls aged eight years and over.
- The school operates across six sites, all of which are in Hampstead, London NW3. The boarding provision is located at the premises used by the upper school at West Heath Road. The lower school is located at 84A Heath Street. The middle school is at 16 New End. Year 5 and 6 pupils attend the premises at The Old White Bear, the synagogue and the Territorial Army Centre in Hampstead. The school makes use of local parks and Hampstead Heath for outdoor space, including for the teaching of physical education.
- There have been several changes in school leadership since the last full standard inspection. A new head of boarding took up his post in September 2018. In addition, he was appointed as the upper school deputy headteacher in February 2019. A new designated safeguarding lead for the whole school, who is also a co-headteacher of the upper school, started work in September 2018. A new human resources (HR) manager started work in September 2018. A new health and safety manager has recently taken up his post, in March 2019. A new special educational needs coordinator was appointed to the upper school in September 2018. In the upper school, there are some vacant posts for middle leaders.
- School leaders brought in consultants to help them address the failings identified in the emergency inspections. A consultant was employed to focus on health and safety, and the premises. This consultant works with leaders to oversee this work, and manage the transition of work to the school's new health and safety manager. Two consultants were engaged to support the school with other areas of weakness. One is now employed by the school as a co-headteacher of the upper school, since March 2019. The other continues to support the school to develop its safeguarding culture, and is a member of the governance and safeguarding advisory board, since March 2019.
- The proprietor appointed the chair of the governance and safeguarding advisory board in the autumn term 2018. The chair and the proprietor asked for expressions of interest from parents to join the advisory board. The chair and the proprietor interviewed candidates, and appointments were made. The advisory board was formally constituted in March 2019. It consists of 11 members, including the chair and the proprietor. Nine members are parents of pupils who currently attend the school. The board has an advisory function, rather than acting as a conventional governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education (DfE), the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the school provision against all the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools. Also, to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards, and other requirements, that it was judged not to comply with at the emergency inspection in September 2018.
- The school's last standard inspection took place in September 2017, when the school was judged to be outstanding. The boarding provision was inspected in June 2018, when national minimum standards for boarding schools in safeguarding, leadership and management, and complaints were unmet. The school had an emergency inspection in July 2018, and again in September 2018. These inspections found that a number of independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools were unmet. The unmet standards related to the welfare, health and safety of pupils, the suitability of staff, the premises, the management of complaints, and leadership and management. In addition to the unmet standards, the school was in breach of its registration by admitting pupils into Year 10.
- A progress monitoring inspection of the school and the boarding provision took place in January 2019. At this inspection, all the standards that were checked were met.
- This inspection, in March 2019, took place without notice.
- Inspectors visited lessons across year groups, including the early years. Some of these visits were made jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and on display.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher/proprietor and other senior and middle leaders, including the head of boarding and boarding staff.
- A meeting was held with representatives of the governance and safeguarding advisory board, including the chair, vice chair and four representatives, who are parents of pupils currently in the school.
- Evidence was gathered from the designated officers for safeguarding from Camden and Barnet local authorities.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents from the 213 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and talked informally to parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the 55 responses to the Ofsted staff survey, met with two groups of staff and spoke with staff informally.
- Inspectors talked to pupils, including all registered boarders, in lessons, at breaktime and in the boarding provision after school. Inspectors met with the school council in the upper and middle schools. There were eight responses to the online Ofsted pupil survey, and 96 pupils responded on paper copies of the online survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation, including: records relating to safeguarding; boarding; health and safety; the curriculum; teaching; and pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Lee Kirwin	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Patrick Sullivan	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school:
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school and takes appropriate action where necessary (NMS 13.1).

The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role (NMS 13.3).

The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met (NMS 13.4).

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