



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

## **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

# **The White House Preparatory School and Woodentops Day Nursery**

**FEBRUARY 2017**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	The White House and Woodentops Day Nursery			
<b>DfE number</b>	208/6384			
<b>Address</b>	24 Thornton Road Clapham Park London SW120LF			
<b>Telephone number</b>	02086749514			
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Office@whitehouseschool.com">Office@whitehouseschool.com</a>			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Daniel Cummings			
<b>Proprietors</b>	Mrs Mary McCahery Mrs Laura McCahery			
<b>Age range</b>	6 months to 11 years			
<b>Number of pupils on roll including the Woodentops Day Nursery</b>	153			
	<b>Boys</b>	90	<b>Girls</b>	63
	<b>EYFS</b>	86	<b>Juniors</b>	67
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 January to 2 February 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 proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils. 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

Mr Andrew Edwards

Team inspector (Head ISA School)

Mrs Jane Morgan

Team inspector for EYFS (Former Head IAPS School)

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## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About the school

- 1.1 The White House Preparatory School and Woodentops Day Nursery is a co-educational independent school for pupils aged 6 months to 11 years. It is situated in its own grounds in a residential area in the London Borough of Lambeth. The Woodentops Day Nursery is managed separately and is open 50 weeks a year. It operates from premises adjacent to the school. Children attending the Day Nursery can also attend the school's EYFS setting when they reach an appropriate age. The school is owned by three proprietors two of whom act as principals, one responsible for the Day Nursery, and one for the school. Together, they fulfil the governance role.
- 1.2 Pupils come from a range of business and professional backgrounds, mostly from the local area, most being white British with a wide range of other ethnic groups represented. Their ability profile is above the national average. The school has identified eight pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional specialist help. Three of these pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. Twenty-eight pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), none of whom require additional support. More able or talented pupils are catered for in lessons.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a broad curriculum in which art, music and sport are as important as traditional academic subjects so allowing each child to reach their full potential. It aims to ensure that each child is recognised as unique and valuable with the firm objective to cultivate a love of learning through a strong support system which includes home, family, their peers, their teachers and their school.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Kindergarten	2-3 year olds
Pre-Reception	3-4 year olds

### Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.5 The previous inspection of the school by ISI was an interim EYFS inspection in November 2014. The recommendation from that inspection was:
- To ensure that assessment procedures include clear coverage in the way in which children learn.
- 1.6 The school has successfully met the recommendations of the previous inspection.
- 1.7 The previous inspection of the whole school was conducted by Ofsted.

## **2. KEY FINDINGS**

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

- Pupils have exceptionally strong literacy and reading skills and express themselves verbally extremely well. Their skills are notably apparent in their writing which is of a particularly high standard.
- Pupils achieve high standards in music and creative arts in response to their delight in these subjects and the school's emphasis on the value of creativity.
- Pupils have a wide range of knowledge in history, geography and science because of the cross-curricular approach to learning which holds their interests and motivates them to learn.
- Pupils are extremely confident at handling numbers and calculations, because of the strong focus on this area of the curriculum. They relish challenge and regularly collaborate whilst solving problems.
- The pupils' ICT skills are developing however, opportunities to develop these skills across the curriculum are limited.
- When given the opportunity, pupils show excellent levels of study skills, showing an enthusiasm for independent thought. However, the opportunities provided are inconsistent.

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

- Pupils are highly confident. They are unafraid to tackle things that are difficult and have strategies in place to ensure their success.
- Pupils have a strong appreciation of their own culture and that of others, and show considerable sensitivity towards those less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils' moral development is excellent; pupils show a keen sense of fairness, distinguishing easily between right and wrong. Their understanding of the need for rules and boundaries is grounded on a sense of mutual and collaborative responsibility.
- Pupils take on responsibilities within the school with enthusiasm and maturity and they work together well.

### **Recommendations**

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Provide consistent opportunities for the use of ICT across the curriculum to further enrich learning.
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to use their initiative in their learning across the curriculum.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils respond exceptionally well to the whole school initiatives of the school's proprietor, 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. Children are confident, enthusiastic learners who are developing strong core skills. Overall, they achieve high standards across the curriculum, building knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning.
- 3.3 Attainment in the EYFS is excellent. Children make outstanding progress in their learning and development relative to their individual starting points, abilities and needs. 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 and discussions with individual pupils and checks 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. The efficient tracking system carefully assesses the progress of all pupils in mathematics and English. A system for tracking progress in other subjects is developing.
- 3.4 Pupils' key strength is the outstanding quality of their literacy and creative skills which are strongly promoted across all subjects. Because of the many opportunities to write for wide range of purposes, pupils across the school, regularly produce writing of an extremely high quality, as seen in the numerous imaginative displays around the school and the work in their books. Pupils ably transfer their knowledge and skills from one subject to another. Younger pupils in a geography lesson referred to their English lessons when writing the names of countries and remembered they had to use capital letters. They then explained efficiently the effects of volcanoes on the environment, and confidently identified the negative and positive consequences, encouraged throughout by teaching that understood each pupil's ability.
- 3.5 Pupils are extremely articulate and confident. They give thoughtful answers to questions and enjoy debate and discussion. This is strongly encouraged during lessons, and time is given to allow all pupils to share their opinions. From the EYFS, they are enquiring learners and eagerly ask questions. They express their ideas clearly, and frequently ask insightful questions to further their knowledge and vocabulary. They use appropriate subject-related vocabulary in lessons. Pupils' increasing language skills allow them to hypothesise and analyse which they readily do. In the EYFS, children have mature listening skills; they respond swiftly to instructions from their teacher and listen respectfully to each other. They are quickly able to read simple sentences and do so with enthusiasm and a sense of achievement. Their successes are regularly acknowledged by their teachers. This sense of mutual respect in lessons is a strong feature throughout the school.
- 3.6 Achievement in mathematics is excellent throughout the school. Pupils are extremely competent at handling number and calculations. They are adept at solving word problems with tenacity and persistence, intent on success. All pupils make excellent progress towards challenging Year 6 external entrance examinations. Pupils enjoy working together and supporting each other and this is a significant aspect in lessons.



- 3.7 In the EYFS, children use numbers confidently in their play, and adults skilfully use opportunities to encourage children to count and reinforce their number recognition, for example by counting the carriages on the constructed train in a practical play activity. Older pupils enthusiastically use their knowledge to solve problems and are regularly encouraged to explain their methodology. They relish applying their skills to mathematical challenge competitions which the school regularly organises with local schools. A contributory factor is that staff are encouraged to seek out new and exciting experiences for pupils that complement the curriculum and learning in the classroom which they do with considerable effect. The small class sizes enable teachers to use close understanding of the pupils' needs and abilities to promote self and peer assessment in a constructive and helpful manner.
- 3.8 Pupils' high achievement benefits greatly from a strong cross-curricular approach to teaching. There is a whole school commitment to educate and provide boundaries for pupils to enjoy activities, even those that involve risk. Pupils are encouraged and supported to make choices safely, through the provision of a safe environment and empowering education. In the EYFS, children confidently explore the world around them and independently access and engage in activities which promote their learning. Older pupils attend a residential experience in Spain or France to complement their learning of modern foreign languages. Younger pupils have opportunities for challenge and independence through the many visits and experiences that are arranged for them. Pupils' scientific knowledge is significantly developing and they have many opportunities to investigate and to use their initiative in science experiments. However, opportunities for pupils to use their initiative in their learning are not provided regularly across the curriculum. Pupils benefit from a wealth of science experiences including visits to many scientific establishments to undertake such activities as exploring DNA and investigating scientific resources. Success in science is regularly celebrated and has become a strong focus for the school. Pupils' strong history knowledge is enriched by activities such as a Roman feast and visits to the British War Museum and the Globe Theatre. The wealth of trips and visits greatly contributes to the pupils' achievements.
- 3.9 The pupils' ICT skills throughout the school are developing well. In the EYFS, children are given opportunities to work with programmable toys and this experience is built upon with the introduction of a wide range of ICT skills as they move through the school. However, the pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum is limited and opportunities are lost for pupils to engage in independent enquiry.
- 3.10 Pupils are unanimous in their enthusiasm for the creative opportunities the school offers and in which they achieve so highly. Music, drama and art are a strong feature of the school and pupils are proud of their successes in these areas. Whether they are playing in the orchestra or singing in the choir, pupils are eager to give of their best and are supportive of their peers.
- 3.11 Pupils throughout the school achieve success in a wide range of sports and activities, because of the range of opportunities provided and because of their enthusiasm, determination and encouragement from staff. These successes include the 'school mark Bronze award' for excellence in sustainable travel to increase the number of cyclists at The White House. This was achieved with training and several school events, and by taking part in the National 'Bike it' competition. The school was ranked the number one in London and 19<sup>th</sup> nationally for bike and scooter journeys to and from school.

3.12 Pupils have an excellent attitude to learning and are enthusiastic and eager to participate in all activities that are made available. Younger children have extremely positive attitudes to learning and participate in activities with great enjoyment and enthusiasm. When given opportunity, pupils develop excellent levels of study skills. Children are quick to think analytically and to hypothesise. In the best lessons, pupils are given opportunities, to draw upon prior learning and other sources of information to develop skills such as synthesis. However, in many lessons, pupils have limited opportunities to demonstrate their independence or to use their initiative.

#### **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' personal skills are excellent. They are strongly aware of their strengths and weaknesses and delight in the rewards that staff provide when they are successful as well as happily accepting advice and support when it is needed. They are confident when tackling things that are difficult because staff ensure that they have strategies in place to aid their success.
- 4.3 Pupils enjoy celebrating their own achievements and are quick to celebrate those of their peers. In lessons, they are confident in putting forward their ideas and unafraid of being wrong, knowing that this is a way of improving their work. Pupils show an awareness of the need to succeed and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They have a mature approach and are determined to improve and give of their best at all times.
- 4.4 Their high self-esteem is promoted through the variety of reward systems in place, and pupils value this recognition. Pupils take on responsibilities in school conscientiously and enthusiastically when given the opportunity and work harmoniously with others. House captains and prefects have responsibility within school to support younger pupils and help them resolve minor disagreements. They are proud to do this and say that the family ethos in school enables them to get to know the younger pupils well. They enjoy the culture of supporting each other which is prevalent throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to be assertive and not aggressive and to consider the choices they make. They take seriously the school aims to share and care and emphasised by the school song 'Make this school a caring school'.
- 4.5 Pupils quickly gain an understanding of right and wrong. They understand the school rules and are determined to maintain the caring family atmosphere that pervades the school. They know that bullying is unacceptable and are happy to ask for help and advice if needed.
- 4.6 Pupils are adept at making decisions. House meetings are held by house captains who encourage pupils to air their views about the school. Younger pupils say they enjoy these meetings and feel part of a team. Subjects discussed have included lunch menus, playtime games, plans for anti-bullying week and additions to the extra-curricular activities. Pupils are confident that their ideas are listened to and were delighted to discuss the advent of fish fingers on the lunch menu and the forming of an origami club as a consequence of these views. The dedicated day, 'Gathering of the Houses,' enables pupils to develop as teams and integrate new members of houses from Reception to Year 6. House captains from Year 6 lead the day, and pupils attend school in their house colours ready to play teambuilding games designed by their peers who collaborate well whilst doing this. The house system is deemed extremely important by pupils, and they eagerly support their house through their work and behaviour, with respect for themselves and others and positive attitudes towards work forming the basis for the main house point reward programme. Pupils receive certificates and badges to celebrate their achievements of which they are proud.

- 4.7 In the EYFS, the children are involved in many decisions made within the classroom. They enthusiastically enjoy activities of their choosing in collaboration with their peers; they decide on the book for story time and agree appropriate classroom rules, for example sharing resources kindly with each other. Children confidently speak in front of their peers and share their news and do so with great gusto. Praise and encouragement are key features and children happily respond to these. The ability to make choices enables the children to regularly take responsibility for their learning and feel valued having made a contribution to their class and the school. As pupils move through the school they are confident in making decisions when given the opportunity. They are keen to give their opinions in lessons and to share ideas with their peers. Across the school there is an afternoon each week dedicated to encouraging pupils to make choices. Pupils join together in activities such as art music and sport, working alongside other pupils of all ages. Older pupils decide on a product to promote in co-operation with a local business and engage in activities to brand and sell the item.
- 4.8 Since the previous inspection, the structure of the outdoor activity residential trips designed to foster confidence and resilience as well as raising independence by staying away from home, has been improved. Year 3 attend a teambuilding day and Years 4 and 5 attend a local outdoor activity centre for four days. Year 6 benefit greatly from foreign residential trips. Pupils grow in confidence; they gain independence and work well within a team, sharing responsibility for various tasks. They say that these trips help them to become more organised, take responsibility for themselves and encourage collaboration.
- 4.9 The quality of the pupil's 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 non-material aspects of life in assemblies and house meetings, and they say they appreciate these because they feel like one big family. They have a strong sense of self-esteem as a result of the recognition they receive for their successes, both in class and in assemblies. Many pupils perform music to a high standard, and pupils show confidence in performing and enjoy 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 reveals the pupils' appreciation of beauty and their capacity to think beyond day-to-day issues.
- 4.10 Pupils know how to stay safe. From an early stage, children learn the importance of road safety. This is an essential part of their education, as they regularly cross roads and many cycle on their way to school. A strong feature of school life is the school's commitment to ensuring that pupils ride their cycles safely. This is achieved with regular training. Pupils 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 explanations, reinforce pupil's safety. Pupils understand the need to stay fit and healthy and the importance of healthy eating.
- 4.11 Pupils have an excellent appreciation and respect for their own and each other's faith and cultures through the school's ethos of mutual respect and they have a well-developed understanding of what it means to be British. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, parents were unanimous in their opinion that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and belief.

- 4.12 The pupils show great sensitivity to each other and those less fortunate, and are well aware of the needs of others beyond their school. The whole school actively contributes to a wealth of charities and good causes through fundraising activities, many of which pupils have chosen themselves. Pupils are proactive in taking the initiative to organise events and support a charity as a consequence, the 'snackilish' event run every week by Year 6, provides donations for local charities.
- 4.13 Pupils feel they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. By the time they reach Year 6 and feel confident to move on to the school of their choice.