

School inspection report

23 to 25 April 2024

Heritage School

17 to 19 Brookside

Cambridge

CB2 615

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders work effectively together with trustees to review and evaluate the work of the school. Together they effectively translate their clear shared vision for the school into development plans which promote pupils' progress and wellbeing. The ethos of the school is modelled by teachers, communicated well to parents, and understood by pupils.
2. Pupils develop skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of academic subjects and co-curricular activities. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because teachers identify and meet their individual needs.
3. Results at GCSE show that pupils make good progress from their starting points, often better than their expected performance based on assessment at entry.
4. Positive attitudes to learning and respectful behaviour are fostered by leaders and teachers. Pupils behave well in lessons because teachers have clear expectations and encourage their learning. Pupils' awareness and understanding of 'school habits' promoted by leaders through posters and assemblies and a whole school culture which has this ethos at its centre contributes to their positive behaviour, acceptance of responsibility and preparation for life in British society.
5. The relationships and sex education (RSE) programme meets statutory requirements and contains appropriate content overall. However, teaching about puberty and safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships did not meet the needs of some older pupils as substantially as possible.
6. There are effective arrangements in place for health and safety and fire safety. Staff are suitably trained and arrangements for supervision and first aid are appropriate.
7. Leaders promote the importance of mutual respect through discussions about the importance of this in the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. Leaders and staff model respectful behaviour well.
8. Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities and staff are appropriately trained and follow suitable procedures whenever any safeguarding concerns arise. Pupils feel safe and know who to talk to if they have a concern.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen the RSE programme's teaching about puberty and safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, to meet all pupils' needs more substantially.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders ensure that the founding vision and philosophy of the school informs the school's aims and practice. This well-articulated vision is expressed in all aspects of school life, as leaders promote a curriculum that effectively develops the habit of attention and actively promotes pupils' creativity and aesthetic sensibilities.
10. Leaders ensure that pupils gain understanding and skills and make good progress by the creation of a 'knowledge-rich curriculum' through which pupils develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills across a comprehensive range of subjects.
11. The promotion of pupils' wellbeing is central to the school's ethos and is at the heart of school culture. Leaders know their pupils very well and ensure that the provision meets their individual needs well overall. Pupils have confidence in the school's leaders.
12. Trustees provide appropriate support and challenge to school leaders to ensure that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They work closely with leaders to evaluate the performance of the school in order to ensure that the Standards are met.
13. Leaders in the early years ensure that a wide variety of activities is matched to children's needs and interests so that positive attitudes to learning and respectful behaviour are fostered. Through learning walks and regular monitoring of lessons, leaders ensure that teachers effectively communicate their subject knowledge so that pupils make good progress.
14. Parents are provided with extensive information by a well-maintained school website which contains the policies and information required by the Standards. Leaders provide parents with a twice annual written report on their child's progress.
15. There is a suitable complaints policy which is implemented effectively. The small number of complaints received are handled in a timely fashion. Leaders keep due records and trustees maintain oversight of the school's processes for responding to any complaints that arise, including of any actions taken by leaders in responding to these.
16. Trustees and leaders have effective oversight of health and safety. Potential risks are identified through risk auditing, and leaders and trustees put in place suitable measures to assess and mitigate risk in areas such as fire safety, health and safety and educational visits. Risk assessments take into account pupils' welfare needs, such as any dietary requirements or medical conditions.
17. Leaders maintain effective and proactive links with external agencies, for example, to support their safeguarding practice, to provide careers guidance for pupils and to support leaders in evaluating the work of the school. The school meets all the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and an appropriate accessibility plan is in place. Leaders ensure inclusivity for pupils from all backgrounds and strive to meet their individual needs by a regular review of the school's accessibility plan and the provision of effective support when required for pupils who have SEND.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

18. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. Leaders' decision to provide a knowledge-rich curriculum, which they ensure is taught well, gives pupils a learning experience which is highly effective in promoting positive beneficial outcomes for pupils. For example, because of the high aspirations set by teachers, Year 8 pupils in English lessons discuss literary terms more typically used by pupils studying for GCSE, and pupils in the junior school produce highly detailed in-depth and independent research of science and nature for their age.
20. Pupils' development of knowledge and understanding arises from teachers who have extensive subject knowledge, plan their lessons well and have high expectations of their pupils. Teachers utilise appropriate pedagogical techniques that allow all groups of pupils to make progress. As a result, pupils develop positive learning habits which support their own development as learners. They are attentive in lessons and engage well with their learning, act responsibly and are self-motivated. Observational annotated drawings from nature are practised with much skill from an early age and pupils demonstrate advanced listening skills in using the technique of narration to re-tell stories. Pupils of all ages take much care over their work.
21. In the infant and junior schools, pupils go on regular nature walks which enable them to make sophisticated connections, often beyond age-related expectations, between what they observe in nature and other elements of their classroom work. Detailed and precise study of sophisticated texts and ideas relevant to a range of subjects allows pupils, including those in the youngest years, to acquire a deep knowledge and appreciation of culture such as art and music. As a result, pupils develop knowledge and understanding in advance of their years and achieve GCSE examination results above those expected for their starting points.
22. The curriculum is planned to support pupils' development in all required areas, including technological. Leaders have considered any potential unintentional risk of detriment of the school's chosen teaching methods and shaped the curriculum to avoid these. For example, leaders ensure that the planning of the curriculum enables pupils to acquire sufficient competence in information and communication technology (ICT), effectively mitigating the potential risk of a possible weakness in this area that they had identified through their emphasis on the use of texts rather than screens.
23. Pupils develop a broad range of skills and interests through a programme of extra-curricular activities in which pupils engage enthusiastically. This includes an after-school club in which pupils in the infant and junior schools can practise activities ranging from quiet reading or archery to parachute games. Participation in the extracurricular activities develops pupils' skills in the areas chosen and fosters their intellectual curiosity and self-motivation.
24. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported, helped by teachers' extensive knowledge of individual pupils' learning needs which they use to adapt tasks set in lessons to help pupils meet their targets. As a result, these pupils make good, and sometimes, rapid progress.
25. There is an effective framework for the assessment of pupils' progress. In the infant and junior schools, detailed tracking of progress in individual pupils' reading and spelling enables teachers to adapt their teaching in response to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils in the infant school demonstrate a reading ability beyond that typical of their chronological age. Pupils are articulate and can express themselves both verbally and in writing very well. The youngest children learn to write in full

sentences from very early on. This is because attention is given to accurate grammar and spelling accuracy. Pupils are able to write extensively and independently about their ideas, such as in extended essays about Robin Hood by pupils in Year 4 and in junior school pupils' detailed 'books of centuries' folders which contain maps and historical accounts filed in chronological order.

26. Subject leaders monitor pupils' progress well and use their understanding of this to identify any gaps in learning and provide additional support when required. Feedback from teachers is thorough, and enables pupils to understand what steps to take to improve their work and make further progress.
27. On average, the oldest pupils attain GCSE grades at least one grade above that predicted from assessment of their attainment at entry to the school.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 28. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

29. Leaders and staff promote mutual respect amongst pupils through discussions within the PSHE programme on themes such as kindness and 'what makes a good friend' for younger pupils and more challenging topics such as 'healthy relationships' for older pupils. Visits to places of worship of different faiths and 'international day' encourage pupils to be respectful of those with different beliefs. Leaders promote respect for people's protected characteristics, such as race and religion, through assemblies, including some led by pupils, and through a PSHE programme which explores themes such as prejudice and equality.
30. A programme of educational visits serves to develop pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities in the physical education (PE) and programme. These help to develop fine and gross motor skills such as co-ordination and ball skills. The PE and PSHE programmes educate pupils about the importance of healthy diet and sufficient exercise. Senior pupils' participation in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) further promotes and develop pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing.
31. In the early years, an awareness of respecting personal space and the importance of hygiene is developed through storytelling and development of class habits which serve to support whole school habits. Pupils learn to stay healthy through the PSHE curriculum, the content of which is communicated to parents through regular emails. The relationship education (RE) programme for younger pupils and the relationship and sex education (RSE) programme for older pupils contain age-appropriate content and are effective overall. However, teaching about puberty and safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships did not meet the needs of some older pupils as substantially as possible.
32. Leaders promote positive behaviour by encouraging pupils to self-regulate their behaviour, aided by a sanctions system which encourages self-reflection. Pupils are attentive, polite and engage well with their studies. This stems from embedding appropriate habits from a young age. Any incidents of bullying are swiftly and appropriately dealt with.
33. Pupils are appropriately supervised, including in the early years and at break and lunchtime, by sufficient members of staff on duty in the playground and within school buildings. The school premises and accommodation are maintained to an appropriate standard through regular checks and servicing of equipment. Fire safety policies, and measures such as regular fire drills, the testing of alarms and self-closing doors, are appropriately implemented and regularly monitored. Suitable arrangements are in place to care for pupils who become unwell and first aid is suitably administered when required by staff who have regular and up-to-date training.
34. Admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities to the local authority by reporting when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

35. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

36. The school is an inclusive and purposeful community in which pupils mix easily with their peers and those in other school years. Leaders and staff model the school's philosophy and values, and communicate effectively about how these apply in different social contexts. As a result, pupils develop socially as well as intellectually. Pupils mix well with pupils in different year groups in activities such as choir, and they support each other as buddies or by helping younger pupils with reading.
37. Teachers encourage discussions about issues such as racism and sexism in PSHE lessons so that pupils acquire age-appropriate understanding and respect for those with protected characteristics, such as religion, race and sex. Leaders create safe spaces for the discussion of sensitive issues and help pupils respect the different groups that make up society.
38. Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities that make social and cultural links to their locality and the wider world. Pupils are taught about diverse faiths and undertake trips to observe the practice of different faiths, such as to a mosque and a synagogue. The curriculum includes substantial study of art, music and poetry, in keeping with the expressed aims and ethos of the school. Such in-depth study enables pupils to develop a deep appreciation, knowledge and understanding of key cultural works.
39. Starting in the early years, leaders actively promote British values, such as an understanding of democracy and the rule of law, through voting for the school council, learning about different people in the community, and listening to stories and assemblies. Pupils learn to have respect for institutions, the law and democracy. They practise first-hand the principles of democratic government through forums such as mock elections and various school councils, make visits to the House of Parliament and learn about local and national government in PSHE. As a result, pupils are engaged and informed about British society.
40. Pupils develop their appreciation and understanding of the value of evidence-based argument as they move through the school. They show respect for the opinions and feelings of people whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own, typified in a sensitive pupil-led debate on the likelihood of peace in the Middle East. Leaders present balanced perspectives on political issues and encourage pupils to do the same. Leaders promote the development of 'whole school habits', which are communicated through assemblies and tutor lessons, and displayed on posters around the school. The promotion of these 'habits', such as a focus on pupils improving their concentration, attention and patience, develops pupils' social understanding and a sense of responsibility.
41. Effective and impartial careers advice, delivered through a combination of PSHE lessons, assemblies and enrichment activities, equip pupils to understand and explore the range of next steps open to them. The school benefits from a partnership with an external provider, which delivers workshops to each year group. Leaders have carefully thought through careers provision and mapped them against national benchmarks.
42. Leaders promote economic understanding effectively. Children in the early years re-enact everyday experiences in their imaginary shopping play. Younger pupils are taught about earning and spending money and how to use pocket money wisely. A local grocery store challenge in which pupils

compare prices of goods in their locality introduces them to consumer price comparisons. Older pupils learn about issues related to economic wellbeing, the management of personal finances, and income and expenditure.

43. Pupils develop their understanding and demonstration of social responsibility by leading lunchtime activities and contributing to the school council. Pupils are encouraged in assemblies and through PSHE to develop empathy and to consider the needs of those in wider society. Pupils are involved in several in local and global citizenship projects, ranging from community carol singing, to fund raising for a school in Uganda.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

- 44. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Safeguarding

45. The school's safeguarding culture is robust. Leaders cultivate an awareness amongst staff that 'it could happen here'. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and in line with current statutory guidance. Trustees maintain regular oversight of the school's safeguarding procedures, including through a comprehensive annual review.
46. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities are suitably trained for their role and have sufficient time to carry out their safeguarding duties. Leaders respond effectively whenever safeguarding concerns are raised and maintain suitable safeguarding records. Leaders maintain effective partnerships with external agencies, including the local authority and have appropriate arrangements in place to respond to any allegations or concerns about staff.
47. Leaders encourage pupils to share any concerns that they might have. Pupils are comfortable talking to adults if something is worrying them.
48. The school teaches pupils how to stay safe online. Online safety is embedded through the curriculum, and taught in particular in PSHE lessons. The school's filtering arrangements block harmful content. Leaders monitor online activity effectively.
49. Staff are well trained to address safeguarding concerns and receive regular updates from the designated safeguarding lead. They have received appropriate training about the 'Prevent' duty. A weekly emailed safeguarding question strengthens staff's awareness of safeguarding responsibilities and procedures.
50. The school has a secure recruitment process. Senior leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment procedures. All required pre-employment safeguarding checks on staff, volunteers and governors are completed before employment begins. The school's single central record of appointments is accurately maintained. Staff files contain the information required by current statutory guidance.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 51. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Heritage School
Department for Education number	873/6045
Registered charity number	1039099
Address	Heritage School 17 to 19 Brookside Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 615
Phone number	01223 350 615
Email address	office@heritageschool.org.uk
Website	http://www.heritageschool.org.uk
Proprietor	Child Light Ltd
Chair	Mr Thomas Amies
Headteacher	Mr Jason Fletcher
Age range	4 to 16
Number of pupils	192
Date of previous inspection	6 May 2021

Information about the school

52. Heritage School is an independent co-educational day school situated in the centre of Cambridge. The school is registered as a school with a Christian religious character. It is a charitable trust whose trustees have proprietorial responsibility.
53. The early years setting consists of one Reception class for 15 children aged 4 to 5 years.
54. The school has identified 37 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
55. English is an additional language for 52 pupils.
56. The school states that its aims are inspired by the writings of Charlotte Mason (1842 to 1923), a British educational reformer and founder of the Parents' National Education Union (PNEU). The school seeks to provide a knowledge-rich curriculum which engages, inspires and challenges pupils to enjoy learning for its own sake. The school's vision is to see pupils leave school motivated to live well, confident in themselves, and skilfully and creatively engaged with ideas and the world around them so that they can meet the challenges of life in the 21st century workplace and make an active contribution to society.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

23 to 25 April 2024

57. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

58. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assembly
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

59. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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