

Heritage School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended 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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Heritage School is an independent, co-educational school with a Christian foundation that opened in September 2007. It was last inspected in September 2008. The school is located in the centre of Cambridge. There are 99 pupils on roll aged between four and thirteen years who are taught in seven classes. Sixteen of these pupils are in the Reception class of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are currently three pupils on roll with a statement of special educational needs. The school intends to extend its age range to 16 years. It seeks to provide a high quality of education based on the principles of British educationalist, Charlotte Mason, who founded the Parents' National Education Union in the late 19th century. The school aims to provide a rich education, based on a broad curriculum likened to 'an abundant feast', 'designed to lay strong foundations in core skills, engage children with inspirational ideas and help them retain their natural love of learning'; and to 'prepare children for life, not merely for examinations'.

Evaluation of the school

Heritage School provides a good education for its pupils and meets its aims extremely well. It has continued to improve since its previous inspection, has some outstanding features, and now meets all but two of the regulations. The curriculum and other activities match the ability range and interests of the pupils well. They clearly enjoy their education and make good progress because of effective teaching and thorough assessment. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding; behaviour is exceptional and pupils leave the school as confident, articulate, well-rounded young people. The school has robust arrangements for safeguarding pupils and provision for their welfare, health and safety is outstanding; parents value highly the care provided and the attention given to promoting pupils' well-being and enjoyment of school

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. It has breadth and variety and secures the enjoyment and interest of pupils extremely well with some outstanding features. The curriculum is now supported by detailed schemes of work which ensure the

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

progression of pupils' knowledge and skills from Reception. The school's approach to delivering the curriculum is orderly and systematic through lessons which are generally short and to the point. English and mathematical skills are developed to high levels by the time pupils leave the school. The emphasis on narration was seen to be outstandingly effective, particularly in history, Bible and picture study. In these lessons, pupils routinely retell stories or rehearse other factual information which they have shared; this helps them to become extremely confident and able communicators. Not all teachers, though, are equally skilled at developing these skills. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They do particularly well in developing their early reading, writing and mathematical skills. They settle quickly and, because of the good emphasis on promoting their personal skills, they soon adopt good learning behaviour. Leaders recognise that the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum requires further development so that all six areas of learning are promoted equally well both indoors and outside.

Nature walks are a routine feature of the curriculum. They provide high quality first-hand experiences which underpin science and geography and often result in the closely observed watercolour paintings made in nature notebooks. They also ensure pupils' appreciation of the awe and wonder of the natural world. An excellent enrichment programme is highly valued by pupils and their parents and carers because activities are many and varied, and all help to prepare pupils for rich, rewarding and responsible adult lives. The school emphasises books, rather than information and communication technology, to develop pupils' lifelong love of reading and to promote continued self-education. Pupils and parents appreciate this. Pupils' reading age is generally above that normally found. However, a small number of pupils and parents and carers say that they would like more opportunities for pupils to develop their computer skills. Good use is made of subject specialists. For example, pupils learn Latin and French from an early age and reach good standards. There are many varied opportunities for physical education. Several pupils and parents and carers volunteered that the high quality of provision in physical education is one of the things they value most about the school.

School leaders ensure that the education provided for those pupils with particular difficulties is of high quality. Personal development plans emphasise the development of the whole child and ensure that barriers to learning are addressed successfully. As a consequence, all pupils, whatever their background or need, make the most of all that the school has to offer.

Teaching and assessment are good and result in all pupils making good progress. Some outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection although a small proportion remains satisfactory, for example, for the youngest pupils in some areas of learning. Relationships are strong, respectful and trusting. Because teachers know their pupils exceptionally well and class sizes are small, there is considerable focus on pupils' individual needs, with tasks that are closely matched to the abilities of all pupils. This enables them to make mostly good and sometimes outstanding progress. Teachers are particularly skilled at encouraging tenacity, independence and good learning behaviour. In the best lessons, teachers were seen to be actively engaged with learners of all abilities, using careful and probing well-directed questions to

check pupils' understanding, address misconceptions and challenge pupils further. Though progress is rarely less than good, it is relatively slower in a very few lessons. For example, in Key Stage 2, teachers sometimes talk for too long and pupils do not get enough time to apply their learning or to reflect and explain their thinking. On other occasions, all pupils carry out the same task regardless of their ability. Learning support assistants provide effective help to small groups and individual children. They make a strong contribution to developing pupils' reading skills, as do the number of parents and others who volunteer in school. Marking to help pupils improve their work is very effective. Teachers know their pupils extremely well because of the regular and detailed assessments made.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Providing high quality personal, social and health education is central to the school's Christian approach, and is highly valued by parents and carers. It begins on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage where pupils quickly learn respect and how to get on well together. Every day there are opportunities for pupils to reflect, discuss and debate a range of issues from the future of the environment to the importance of positive relationships. Pupils develop a good understanding of the institutions of the United Kingdom through topic work, classroom discussion and assembly themes. Independence is promoted particularly well and pupils often direct their own learning. They have a strong sense of right and wrong, take responsibility for their decisions and understand that there are consequences to their actions. Behaviour is outstanding, both on-and off-site and makes a strong contribution to successful learning.

Pupils are proud to raise money for charitable causes and of the part they play in raising funds to acquire additional resources for the school. They make a strong contribution to the smooth running of the school community and regularly play a part in enhancing the lives of those in the wider community, for example, through shared performances or by litter picking. Pupils study the cultures and faiths of others, and discuss them knowledgeably. When asked, they forcefully protested that discrimination and racism should not be tolerated. There is a well-established partnership with a school in Uganda which aids the successful promotion of pupils' understanding of life in a multi-faith, multi-cultural society. Pupils advocate healthy eating and say they love to be physically active. Their attitudes to learning are extremely positive. One pupil explained that the school had given him the confidence and skills he needs to be successful in life.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very well supervised in school, between the various venues for curriculum activities, and on trips. There are no instances of bullying or other forms of harassment reported by pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils, including staff training and risk assessment, meet requirements and their implementation is rigorous and highly effective and closely monitored by school

leaders. There is a comprehensive policy for child protection, which is implemented very well.

The school has the required policies and practices that minimise risks to pupils' health and safety. Staff have the required training and attend to first aid and medical needs conscientiously and promptly. Practices in relation to fire safety and checking the safety of the premises are robust. Arrangements to promote exemplary behaviour are extremely effective and result in a supremely calm environment for learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles and to keep safe. They talk with secure knowledge and confidence about how to achieve this. The excellent emphasis placed on developing pupils' emotional health results in pupils saying that they are confident that they can talk to adults about any concerns. Strong relationships enable adults to pick up quickly when pupils are facing challenges and put the appropriate support in place. The school fulfils all its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All adults have been subject to the necessary checks to confirm their suitability to work with children. These are recorded on a single central register as required.

Premises and accommodation at the school

School staff do all they can to maximise the use of the limited space available in the Victorian building, and ensure that it provides a safe and effective environment for learning. The school has expanded considerably since the last inspection and now makes use of an additional adjacent building. Good use is made of local facilities for physical education and other curriculum activities. The playground has been improved with the addition of large play equipment which pupils are encouraged to use safely, but without fear. The school still does not have appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, as identified in a previous inspection. However, plans are in place to provide these facilities when the school extends its accommodation again in September. The school has now made suitable arrangements for showering facilities for pupils aged 11 years and over. An arrangement has been made to use those of the nearby school where Heritage pupils use the sports facilities until more permanent arrangements can be made within the school's own building.

Provision of information

The extensive range of information provided to parents and carers by the helpful prospectus and school website is clear, accurate and up to date. The school operates an open door policy and there are two formal opportunities each year for parents and carers to consult with their children's teachers. Parents and carers report a high degree of satisfaction with the school's work. The school does not submit to the local authority an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of pupils that they fund.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedures for handling complaints meet all requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with regulation 5 of the Education (School premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- submit to the local authority an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of pupils registered at the school who are wholly or partly funded by the local authority, and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 24(1)(h)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Ensure the most effective features of the curriculum and teaching are consistent across the school.
- Ensure that children have equally rich experiences in all six areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, both indoors and outdoors.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Independent day school		
Date school opened	2007		
Age range of pupils	4 to 13 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 60	Girls: 39	Total: 99
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 2	Girls: 1	Total: 3
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,310 – £7,275		
Address of school	18–19 Brookside Cambridge CB2 1JE		
Telephone number	01223 350615		
Email address	office@heritageschool.org.uk		
Headteacher	Jason Fletcher		
Proprietor	Ranald Macaulay		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Heritage School, Cambridge, CB2 1JE

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school last week. We enjoyed speaking with you and your views are really important to us.

We found that your school is good and can see why you all enjoy coming to school. This is evident in your positive attitude to work and your exemplary behaviour. All the adults at school take excellent care to make sure you are very well nurtured and safe. As a result, you grow in confidence and become extremely well-rounded, independent young people. Because of the good quality individual support you all receive, the good teaching, and the exciting things you are given the opportunity to do, you make good progress in your work.

We would like your school to continue to improve, so we have asked them to do a two things.

- Make sure that all the teaching in school is equally as good as the best that we saw.
- Make sure that all the areas of learning are equally exciting and well taught in the lower prep class.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Harvey
Her Majesty's Inspector