



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

HORNSBY HOUSE SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Hornsby House School

Full Name of School	Hornsby House School		
DfE Number	212/6371		
Registered Charity Number	800284		
Address	Hornsby House School Hearnville Road London SW12 8RS		
Telephone Number	020 8673 7573		
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Email Address	school@hornsby-house.co.uk		
Head	Mr Jon Gray		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Sara Brown		
Age Range	4 to 11		
Total Number of Pupils	398		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (197 boys; 201 girls)		
Numbers by Age	4-5 (EYFS):	66	5-11: 332
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	398	
Head of EYFS Setting	Ms Sheila Bailey		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	23 Nov 2010 to 24 Nov 2010		

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in November 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Hornsby House School is a co-educational day school for boys and girls aged from four to eleven. It was founded in 1988 by Professor Beve Hornsby, who was well-known for her research and teaching in the field of specific learning difficulties. She promoted the concept of multi-sensory learning, as she felt that this form of teaching would benefit children of all abilities. The school has grown nearly twenty-fold since then and has gradually increased academic aspiration whilst retaining a sympathetic approach towards individual learning needs. Sport, design and technology (DT), music and art have grown in importance as the development of the school has provided the opportunities to recruit an increased number of subject specialists and provide specialist teaching spaces and improved facilities. A major building project was completed in 2010, which has provided three extra classrooms, a dining room and full kitchen facility. The lower school playground has been completely re-surfaced and designed with a range of playground games available.
- 1.2 At the time of inspection, there were 398 pupils on roll of whom 197 were boys and 201 girls. Pupils come largely from the surrounding area. The majority of pupils transfer to independent day schools at the end of Year 6, the remainder to local state schools or to boarding schools.
- 1.3 Pupils are admitted to the school on a first come first served system. Entry above Reception is through a morning of informal assessment. Standardised data indicates that the range of pupils' abilities is, overall, above the national average. At the time of the inspection, fifty pupils had been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), of whom thirty-seven are provided with learning support. Their difficulties are of a type to be recorded on the special needs register. This includes one pupil who has a statement of special educational needs. For five pupils, English is an additional language (EAL), and support is provided for this. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds.
- 1.4 The school aims to provide learning for all, where pupils can experience high academic standards within a wide and creative curriculum, to encourage pupils to become independent learners, who enjoy furthering their knowledge and understanding of the world which surrounds them, to provide a happy and stimulating environment in which pupils have opportunities to develop their ideas and initiative, learning to play, to work and to succeed and share their discoveries and to value all its pupils and encourage mutual respect and tolerance between all pupils and adults.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 The pupils' overall achievement is excellent and fulfils the aims of the school in providing learning for all, so that pupils achieve high academic standards within a wide and creative curriculum, as well as providing a happy and stimulating environment in which pupils have opportunities to develop their ideas and initiative. Pupils make rapid progress and achieve high standards at each stage. They have positive attitudes and apply themselves conscientiously to their work. Most pupils are highly literate; by Year 6 they write well for a wide range of purposes and their extended writing is particularly good. Since the last inspection, they have been given greater opportunity to write extensively in subjects other than English. Spelling, grammar and structure are usually accurate, and teachers encourage their pupils to check work carefully. They are highly articulate and confident speakers who listen attentively. They read well and make extensive use of the library for research and to read for pleasure. Pupils use their well-developed skills with number and information and communications technology (ICT) confidently and outstandingly well. The presentation of work is excellent. Pupils are successful in passing entrance examinations for selective senior schools with many being awarded scholarships.
- 2.2 Pupils achieve high standards in sport, particularly cricket, football, netball, hockey rugby and rounders and are often successful in competitions against other schools. Music is strong with many pupils actively participating in school choirs, orchestras and learning musical instruments. They participate well in debating activity, but at present do not have drama as a timetabled activity, nor the opportunity to participate in regular dramatic productions.
- 2.3 The school achieves its aim to provide a high quality education and providing learning for all, so that pupils achieve high academic standards within a wide and creative curriculum. The curriculum offers a balanced range of subjects that meets all pupils' needs. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) gives pupils insight into moral and ethical matters as well as supporting health education. Pupils with LDD are well catered for; their learning needs are thoroughly assessed and individual education plans are drafted in order to provide useful guidance to class teachers. Support is given in class, in small groups or individually and as a result, most make considerable progress. The requirements of the statements of special educational needs are met. The school has identified several pupils as being gifted or talented and promotes additional challenges for them. The range of extra-curricular activities available is vast and extends the range of opportunities available to pupils. These are well attended. A wide range of educational visits in the UK and abroad enriches the pupils' experience, such as the Year 5 extended educational visit to France. Most of the pupils with EAL are fluent English speakers; support is provided for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. Before- and after-school care is well organised and is beneficial.
- 2.4 Teaching is of high quality. Lessons are thoroughly planned with clear objectives and a sequence of activities, which secure and maintain the pupils' interest. Lessons proceed at a lively pace with pupils taking an active part in practical work and concentrating well. This is particularly evident in science lessons, where pupils enjoy practical experiments such as designing and making a burglar alarm, and in

DT where pupils have enjoyed making moving toys and mechanical fairground rides. Teachers are supportive and encouraging and use praise well. Marking is helpful, supportive and informative. The pupils' performance is closely monitored, and additional support and challenge are provided where necessary. Pupils make excellent progress as they advance through the school because of well-planned, well-paced lessons, which encourage a high quality of presentation and independent learning which encourages self-evaluation. This was observed in a Year 6 English lesson where pupils were studying classic fiction, with special focus on *Treasure Island*. A lively discussion took place on analysing character through the descriptors in the text. Skilful questioning by the teacher enabled the pupils to achieve thorough understanding.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.5 The pupils' personal development is excellent and a strength of the school. A strong spiritual understanding is fostered in assemblies, religious education (RE) and PSHCE. The ethos of the school enables self-confidence to flourish. A common thread through interviews with the pupils, and in responses to the pupils' and parental questionnaires, is that the school is friendly and has a family feel. Moral development is excellent; throughout the school, pupils understand what constitutes acceptable behaviour and they respect the school rules, as is reflected in their exemplary behaviour both in and out of the classroom. They demonstrate mutual courtesy to each other and to the staff. Rewards such as house points and commendations for good behaviour are awarded to pupils who have shown qualities of kindness and care towards others; displays around the school adopting the international 'Act of Random Kindness Week' emphasise the care shown for and exhibited by each member of the school community.
- 2.6 The pupils' social development is excellent. The school succeeds in providing an environment in which pupils feel valued, appreciate the talents of others and learn to work constructively within a community. Pupils are friendly and confident. The high profile attributed to charitable work gives pupils an excellent understanding of those less fortunate than themselves. Through the strong involvement in art, music, PSHCE and the school's extensive programme of day and extended educational visits, pupils gain a thorough knowledge of their own and other cultures.
- 2.7 The attention given to health and safety measures is excellent, and ensures that staff and pupils benefit from a safe and positive school environment. Clear systems and policies, including those for safeguarding and anti-bullying, support the excellent pastoral care provided by all staff and are well-managed and monitored by those with clearly defined responsibilities. Pupils are confident that they have someone to whom they can turn, and feel well supported. Healthy living is effectively encouraged through PSHCE and science, school meals are nutritious and popular, and catering is of a very high quality. Appropriate medical arrangements are in place for those who are unwell, and medicines are stored and administered properly.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.8 Governance is excellent overall, with an effective range of expertise and skills available. The governing body meets regularly, and is well-defined with a structure of sub-committees including one for education. Well-organised meetings enable governors to oversee the work of the school successfully, and they are actively involved in all aspects of school development. They are rigorous in their monitoring of policies and procedures to ensure the school's full compliance with regulatory

requirements. The central register of appointments is rigorously maintained. Governors are fully trained in child protection and safeguarding matters. The governors recognise their collective responsibility for providing a safe and healthy school for all of their employees, pupils, parents and visitors. In their role as employers they attach the highest priority to ensuring that all the operations within the school environment, both educational and supportive, are delivered in a manner that is safe and healthy for all.

- 2.9 Leadership and management are excellent. The school, including in the EYFS, is strongly led and those in senior positions are approachable and efficient. Their understanding of what is required in terms of monitoring, assessment, planning, peer mentoring and appraisals is excellent. They work extremely well together and involve all staff in discussions which lead to overall ownership of decisions and policies set. They have an excellent vision for the future of the school and are working to ensure the best possible provision for its pupils.
- 2.10 The quality of the premises and the accommodation is excellent. The school has a restricted site and has always taken the opportunity to make the best use of its space. The new building provides three teaching rooms and a spacious dining room. Its modern style complements the Edwardian appearance of the older buildings. The e-learning suites are an outstanding facility for the school, and are used throughout the school day to enhance teaching and learning.
- 2.11 Strong links exist between the school and parents, throughout the school, including the EYFS. These links are successfully promoted and assist the school to meet its aims. Parents of pupils and of prospective pupils are provided with full and relevant information. There is a weekly newsletter, the Hornsby Headlines, as well as informative notice-boards around the school and extensive e-mail contact. Parents are made aware of the complaints procedure and are encouraged to talk to staff about their concerns. The Friends of Hornsby House (FHHA) are actively involved in many aspects of school life. In addition to fund-raising and organising social activities, they organise refreshments after school matches and tournaments and at all school concerts. The FHHA work closely with the staff and pupils to cement the family feel of the school. There are regular parent/teacher interviews, and informative reports are sent out frequently. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated their support for all aspects of the school, in particular the progress their children make, the pastoral care and guidance given, communication with the school and the high standards of behaviour.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

1. Consider including the opportunity for all pupils to have access to drama within the curriculum.
2. Continue to pursue the possibility of extending outdoor activities in the EYFS to enable even more independent learning.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

4.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.1 This is an outstanding setting with the capacity to sustain improvements. An excellent system of review and self-evaluation ensures the achievement of the school's aim of creating high standards of learning experiences for all children, in a stimulating environment. It also ensures that the setting continues to provide experiences that broaden, enrich and extend the skills, talents and values of each member of the school community. Staff sustain existing high standards by regularly identifying areas for improvement, creating a stimulating, colourful environment, where children feel valued and safe. The recommendations of the last Ofsted inspection, to improve access to reading books and to build up multi-cultural resources, have been met.

4.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.2 Leadership and management are outstanding, with a clear vision and understanding of high standards. Excellent and carefully monitored policies and practice ensure that all children are well safeguarded. All adults have been suitably checked, and are well qualified and appropriately trained. Records, policies and procedures necessary for the efficient management of the setting are in place and well implemented. The capacity for sustained improvement is excellent, and is reflected in the perceptive and detailed self-evaluation that identifies priorities and development. An exemplary framework for risk assessments has been established to ensure safety, and this is effectively implemented. In a recent questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and expressed a strong appreciation of their children's progress and the standard of their care. Every opportunity is taken to inform parents of their children's progress through, for example, informal meetings to discuss the curriculum and to outline routines. These are supplemented by twice-yearly reports and by individual parent-teacher meetings held in the spring term. Weekly newsletters and notice-boards keep parents informed, and parents are encouraged to contribute towards the Foundation Stage Profiles.

4.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. All children learn and develop extremely well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. A well-judged balance is maintained between adult-led and child-initiated activities, which involve choosing, exploring and discovering. Children are observant and inquisitive and staff ask challenging questions to develop their thinking skills. Provision for the welfare, health and safety of children is exemplary. Good health and well-being are emphasised and the children are encouraged to eat healthy meals in the recently opened dining room. The behaviour policy is well implemented, leading to a happy and busy atmosphere, where children benefit fully from all of the opportunities provided.

4.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. They make rapid progress and are on course to meet all the Early Learning Goals including communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by the end of their reception year, with many likely to exceed them. In communication and literacy, children were able to write their names with confidence and were beginning to construct simple sentences. In numeracy they were able to count to ten and beyond, and understood the concept of 'more or less than'. They are confident when working with interactive whiteboards, as was seen in an early morning session where children used the interactive whiteboard to self-register, and in a numeracy lesson, where two girls were using the board to order large and small vehicles. Children are inquisitive, enthusiastic and self-motivated, relating well to one another and adults. They co-operate well in their learning and begin to make choices and decisions. Children respect and trust their teachers. They feel safe when choosing indoor and outdoor play, and staff are pursuing the possibility of extending outdoor activities to enable even more independent learning. They enjoy their lunches and understand the importance of staying healthy. Children are provided with secure foundations for their future well-being in all aspects of their learning.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Karin Kelly

Mr David Kendall

Mrs Lynda Boden

Reporting Inspector

Deputy Headmaster, IAPS school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector