



ISI

Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

The Cavendish School

June 2023

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School's Details

School	The Cavendish School			
DfE number	202/6038			
Registered charity number	312727			
Address	The Cavendish School 31 Inverness Street London NW1 7HB			
Telephone number	020 74851958			
Email address	secretary@cavendish-school.co.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Taryn Lombard			
Co-chairs of governors	Mrs Alice Gotto and Mrs Nicola Rushton			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	217			
	EYFS	45	Juniors	172
Inspection dates	13 to 15 June 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The Cavendish School is an independent day school for girls aged from three years to eleven years. Founded by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in 1875, it moved to its current location in 1970. It is a registered charity administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The current headmistress took up her appointment in April 2021 and in March 2020 the school appointed two new co-chairs of governors. A new performance hall and five new classrooms have been established since the previous inspection.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a high quality, caring learning environment that promotes a partnership between home, school and the wider community. It strives to provide all children with opportunities to become resilient, curious, open-minded learners, who engage enthusiastically with the joy of learning whilst at school and go out into the wider world to make a difference to others. The school seeks to deliver a broad, stimulating and challenging curriculum which prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds in the surrounding area and represent a mixture of national and cultural backgrounds. Assessment data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared to those taking similar tests nationally. The school has identified 43 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, ADHD and communication difficulties, of whom 40 receive additional support. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language for 19 pupils, of whom ten receive additional help. The school modifies its curriculum for pupils identified as having particular abilities or talents.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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.

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 published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31 are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school’s arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school’s academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child’s progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school’s website.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 The school has a three-stage complaints process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.17 The school acknowledged that complaints are not always appropriately identified and therefore are not progressed in accordance with the school’s three-stage complaints process, including the informal stage.

2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints in paragraph 33 is not met.

Action point 1

The school must ensure that it follows its own policy with regard to the identification of complaints so that they can be considered under the school’s three-stage complaints policy, including the informal stage [paragraph 33(d); EYFS 3.75].

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.19 The proprietor has not ensured that the leadership and management demonstrate good knowledge and skills and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and that they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.

2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.

Action point 2

The school must ensure that those with responsibility for leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all of the standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports 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.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils are high achievers who succeed academically because of the effective framework of assessment, successful planning for individual needs and nurturing approach of their teachers.
 - From an early stage, pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills, confidently using these to extend their learning across the range of subjects.
 - Pupils have excellent knowledge, skills and understanding, and display highly developed study skills, which they routinely apply to all their subjects.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils develop excellent self-understanding and self-confidence. They are resilient and work hard to achieve success in all they attempt.
 - Pupils' social awareness is strongly developed.
 - Pupils demonstrate a high level of awareness and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life.

Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
- Strengthen pupils' ability to work independently and show initiative in their learning.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The school fully meets its aim to provide all pupils with opportunities to become resilient, curious, open-minded learners, who engage enthusiastically with the joy of learning. As observed in lessons, scrutiny of work and discussions, pupils make rapid progress over time. The youngest pupils make excellent progress from a wide range of starting points, with all children achieving the expected level of development by the end of Reception. Pupils achieve at high levels, as evidenced in their results in standardised assessments and scholarships to selective secondary schools. The vast majority of leavers are offered a place at the senior school of their choice. Pupils' high levels of achievement results from the significant impact of the leadership team who ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. They make effective use of data to provide individual pupils with appropriate support and challenge. This ensures excellent outcomes for all pupils, as does the broad curriculum which encourages aspiration and ambition amongst the pupil body. A very large majority of parents who

responded to the questionnaire stated that teaching enables pupils to make progress and that the school meets their individual needs effectively.

- 3.6 Pupils develop their own interests and talents to a high level through a range of extra-curricular opportunities which is extensive for the size of the school. These include pottery, beginners Arabic, circus skills and music technology. Pupils are eager to compete against each other at chess and are highly competent when focusing on outcomes and decisions that lead to changes in gameplay. Skills for the performing arts are developed rapidly from the early years because there are rich musical opportunities at the school. Pupils benefit from opportunities to take part in ensembles, clubs, concerts and productions throughout the year and many pupils excel in external music examinations with older pupils achieving success at Grade 5. Pupils participate enthusiastically and very successfully in sporting events provided by the school, including recent success in a local inter schools football tournament.
- 3.7 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are excellent. Pupils apply their understanding well to different situations motivated by skilled and challenging teaching. Their understanding is further facilitated by the commitment of governors to a broad and ambitious curriculum. Children in the EYFS establish a secure strong foundation of physical skills. During a football lesson they demonstrated excellent, levels of ball control when dribbling and shooting. Pupils' strong scientific knowledge and understanding is applied successfully to problem-solving activities. Year 2 pupils spoke enthusiastically of their investigation into hydroponics, explaining succinctly that soil is not required for all plant growth and concluded it as a more successful method of growing celery and spring onions rather than carrots. In Year 3 science, pupils were able to successfully develop their knowledge and understanding of reflective materials through an investigation which materials to use as part of a school bag that will act as a safety device when children walk home in the dark. Pupils engage enthusiastically in art, showing creativity and understanding of techniques. Year 6 pupils' creation of side-on profiles in art demonstrated skilful experimentation and research.
- 3.8 Pupils' speaking, listening reading and writing skills develop to particularly high levels as they move through the school, supported well by staff who plan carefully for their individual needs. Pupils of all ages listen actively, question thoughtfully, write eloquently and read avidly because they are encouraged in all walks of school life to do so. Children in the EYFS demonstrate strong knowledge about the relationship between letters and sounds and apply this confidently to writing simple sentences. Year 1 pupils were highly expressive and imaginative when creating an alternative 'live' book cover for *Lila and the Secret of Rain*. Year 3 pupils studying the book *Black Dog* showed excellent analytical and interpretative skills when exploring its textual and visual literacy elements. They demonstrated secure levels of understanding and were able to identify the significance of devices, for example capitalisation and verb choice. Year 5 pupils were highly persuasive as they discussed possible solutions and compromises to the issues Elizabeth 1 faced. Year 6 pupils demonstrated a strong level of understanding of rhyming couplets and patterns, discussing poems intelligently and establishing word banks and trends from the analysis. Throughout the school pupils are provided with many opportunities to express themselves on stage, in the classroom through 'show and tell', assemblies and productions. Older pupils, including those with SEND, excel at English Speaking Board examinations. The majority gain distinctions because of excellent teaching and substantial opportunities across the curriculum to develop strong oracy and reading skills.
- 3.9 Pupils develop excellent skills in mathematics. Well-planned and ambitious investigations support pupils in developing a strong understanding of numeracy. Problem-solving activities enable pupils to extend their mathematical thinking through the use of logic and prior knowledge to enhance their skills. EYFS children successfully investigated numbers using manipulatives to identify numbers beyond 20 as either odd or even and identify patterns between them. Pupils in Year 1 doubled numbers between 10 and 100 confidently and accurately when working independently. Pupils in Year 2 calculated confidently the difference between two values in a table indicating pupils' favourite ice cream flavours. Year 4 pupils collaborated to successfully discuss shape combinations and manipulate

a variety of shapes to construct a completed tangram. Year 5 pupils secured their knowledge of measurements and scaling through effective use of practical materials and equipment. Pupils apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example, in music technology, pupils calculated beats to understand rhythm, and in school council, pupils calculated average salt consumption through saltshakers to support their argument for salt to be made available in the dining room.

- 3.10 Pupils acquire confident skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and apply these effectively across the curriculum. They demonstrate high levels of coding and programming skills in relation to their age through well-planned computing teaching and opportunities to enrich their skills in clubs and activities. This is because of senior leaders' development of an embedded curriculum for ICT skills, and through the commitment of governors to high quality technology. Year 1 pupils used tablets efficiently to research information using a range of different platforms succinctly sharing their discoveries with their peers. Year 5 pupils confidently used age-appropriate coding software to create imaginative personal worlds, creating underwater and forest scenes in which elements responded to coded instructions. Pupils in Year 4 produced sophisticated and fluent animations related to the story of *Beowulf*.
- 3.11 Pupils develop highly effective study skills, which are embedded and thus permeate across all areas of learning. This is because senior leaders promote study skills. Pupils are quick to process, analyse and question. They think for themselves, focus well and show perseverance to do their best. Pupils in Year 1 demonstrated a strong sense of intellectual curiosity when asking pertinent questions relating to the history of their local area. Year 4 pupils preparing illustrated storybooks written in French used dictionaries effectively to find and spell challenging vocabulary. Year 6 pupils enthusiastically talked about how they used planning sheets to effectively write metaphorically in their descriptions of modern-day Camden. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their child with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life.
- 3.12 Pupils of all ages demonstrate excellent attitudes towards their learning. They approach their studies with a sense of purpose and commitment in response to well-planned learning activities with real-world contexts and enthusiastic teaching. However, in a number of lessons observed, pupils were unable to fully exploit opportunities to lead in their own learning because of lessons that were highly controlled. Pupils are keen to contribute their ideas to the initial planning of investigations, and when given choice they have the intuition to choose wisely. Pupils take care in the presentation of their work and show determination and resilience. They work well together in lessons and said in discussions that the many opportunities to collaborate with their peers enhance their confidence as learners and contribute to their high level of attainment and progress. The youngest members of the school show excellent levels of earnestness, endeavour and concentration.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND, EAL and the most able, develop high levels of resilience, self-esteem and self-confidence, enthusiastically pushing and challenging themselves to succeed. In discussions pupils confidently explained the value of planning, describing how teachers' feedback allowed them to shape their own learning by adopting resilience and trust in what they are being asked to do. Self-confidence was evident throughout the Year 6 performance, the cast performed with confidence and stage presence. The oldest pupils said that they feel extremely well prepared for the transition to senior schools. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to be confident and independent.
- 3.15 Pupils' social awareness and contribution to others, the school and the community are excellent. The school is highly successful in fulfilling its aim for pupils to go out into the wider world to make a difference to others. Pupils collaborate effectively in their lessons and their play. The digital leaders programme enables older pupils to support in computing lessons, present in assemblies and shape

the digital development of the school. During Arabic club, pupils worked intensely and with mutual respect in pairs to achieve success in a series of games that tested their familiarity with Arabic letters and script. Pupils are socially aware and contribute positively to the lives of their immediate and wider community as a result of leaders and staff's commitment to developing an understanding of social responsibility. Pupils in Year 3 showed strong social awareness and excellent empathy when exploring the body language of the character Small in the *Black Dog*. Pupils who represent the school council and 'Eco Team' show high levels of confidence when choosing charities to support and engaging in fundraising activities. For example, pupils identified an organisation tackling homelessness in Camden, invited a speaker and then organised a toy sale to raise funds. Pupils in the school council have also initiated changes to the school lunch menu that promotes sustainability. The Eco Team's letter to the local council has contributed to plans for more trees to be planted near the school site. Year 6 pupils run enterprise projects and profits go to charities such as the Camden-based Little Village. Pupils in Year 6 also contributed creatively to the local community by designing pizza boxes used in a local pizzeria.

- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate an excellent appreciation of spiritual, philosophical and other non-material aspects of life. They adopt a mindful approach to how their decisions impact themselves and others. Pupils strongly cultivate their understanding of world religions and the meaning of spirituality in different cultures and traditions. They participate very well in religious education (RE) lessons, visiting places of worship and listening to visiting speakers as part of the *Cavendish Courageous Conversations* initiative. The oldest pupils exhibited high levels of thoughtfulness and respect through presentations in response to beliefs and traditions they had researched. Children in the EYFS use mindfulness and circle time effectively to reflect on the day, celebrate achievements and give compliments. Year 2 pupils produced thoughtful and excellently executed designs for their own special places. In these, they represented a strong sense of valuing non-material elements such as prayer, healing and calmness. Older pupils produced extended pieces of writing called 'If all the World Were' which reflected pupils' sense that basic human needs such as comfort, peace and joy are important. Pupils spoke appreciatively of the calm when interacting with the school wellbeing dog. Year 3 pupils explained how they had been inspired to do a charity walk to help a member of their wider community injured in a London Underground accident. The breadth of opportunity for participation in music and performance is a significant contributory factor towards pupils' spiritual awareness.
- 3.17 Pupils' respect for diversity and cultural understanding is excellent. Pupils recognise the importance of celebrating diversity in their school, are sensitive towards each other and understand the value of recognising that differences enable them to learn from each other. Pupils spoke to the inspectors of the importance of diversity within their friendships. They reflected that an important part of being part of the Cavendish community is recognising that inequality can exist outside of school and that they are ambassadors for a culturally diverse community. Year 6 Pupils spoke empathically about the *Cavendish Courageous Conversations* programme, which they said was inspirational in raising cultural awareness amongst their own and the wider community. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire said that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.
- 3.18 Pupils understand the importance of making decisions and taking responsibility for their lives. They relish opportunities to effect positive change for themselves and their community. This is supported by the school culture, promoted by leadership and management, and the wide-ranging enrichment opportunities that are offered. Children in the EYFS select their activity at the start of the day, choosing activities that sustain their interest and engagement. They showed strong decision-making skills when selecting materials to use when creating frog models and pond life backgrounds. Older pupils demonstrated effective decision-making skills when deciding how to decorate and style their individual pots in pottery club. Year 3 pupils explained how they could choose warm-up activities and teams in netball so that they could improve their own training and performance. Year 4 pupils spoke about a residential visit that encouraged them to become more effective at choosing and arranging resources as well as dividing up tasks when making a bug house. In school council, pupils vote and

agree on different initiatives for school improvement. For example in Eco Club, pupils were able to identify ways in which they can effect changes to support their community to reduce the use of single use plastics in the school. Older pupils recognise that the decisions they made impacted their effectiveness as learners for their future lives including being able to choose to learn how to touch type. They spoke about the effectiveness of the school's careers day.

- 3.19 Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and are extremely respectful of school rules and each other, which in discussions pupils attributed to the inculcation of the golden rules throughout learning and the school's regular celebration of these values. Pupils explained that when there is a task that needs completing it is the right thing to volunteer to get the job done. Year 4 pupils spoke confidently about the importance of free speech to raise awareness of inequality and injustice within their community and around the world. A few pupils who responded to the questionnaire disagreed that pupils are kind and respect each other. Inspectors found that incidences of unkind behaviour were few and dealt with appropriately by the school. Pupils have a strong understanding of the rule of law and are able to talk with confidence about doing the right thing.
- 3.20 Pupils have a strong sense of how to stay safe and of the importance of both physical and mental health. This is supported through visual reminders that reinforce these messages. Catering staff work with the children to develop balanced and nutritious menus through the school council. Pupils of all ages enjoy developing physical skills, and are keen participants in physical activities as part of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Pupils explained that they are very aware of the need to be emotionally healthy and enjoy taking time for reflection, recognising the importance of being mindful of the impact they have on others in their everyday activity and movement around the school. Their awareness of the need to be safe when using the internet or smart devices is well developed from a young age because of the well planned PSHE and computing curriculum. Year 6 pupils showed excellent awareness of ways they can stay safe in the digital world. They explained clearly and accurately how to use mobile phones and the internet as safely as possible. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire stated that they understand how to safe online.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the co-chairs of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Tracy Handford	Reporting inspector
Mr Nick Baker	Compliance team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr David Collins	Team inspector (Academic deputy head, IAPS and ISA school)
Mr Nicholas Hopton	Team inspector (Head of department, HMC school)