



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Fairley House School

November 2021

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School's Details

School	Fairley House School			
DfE number	213/6327			
Registered charity number	281680			
Address	Fairley House School 30 Causton Street London SW1P 4AU			
Telephone number	020 79765456			
Email address	enquiries@fairleyhouse.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Michael Taylor			
Chair of governors	Mrs Tina Tietjen			
Age range	6 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	180			
	Juniors	63	Seniors	117
Inspection dates	2 to 5 November 2021			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Fairley House School is an independent, co-educational day school for pupils who require support with specific learning difficulties (SpLD). It is a charitable trust operating under the direction of a board of governors. The school opened in 1982 and is located on two sites in central London, about a mile apart from each other. The senior school is situated in Westminster for pupils from Year 6 to Year 11, and the junior school is situated in Lambeth for those from Year 2 to Year 5. Pupils can join the school at any point in time and typically stay for between two and five years before returning to mainstream education.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection a new chair of governors has been appointed.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the junior and senior schools remained open only for children of key workers.
- 1.4 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.5 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.6 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.7 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than the children of key workers or vulnerable pupils received remote learning provision at home.
- 1.8 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades and teacher-assessed grades were awarded.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.9 The school aims to provide rich and stimulating multi-sensory learning experiences, which engage children and capitalise on their strengths, while helping them to overcome challenges in their learning. It seeks to help children to be aware of their learning style preferences and also learn to use different learning styles matched to the task. The school's objectives include the development of the whole child, in order to help children achieve and develop confidence and independence through an encouraging, nurturing ethos in which everyone succeeds.

About the pupils

- 1.10 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from the Greater London area. The school's own assessment data indicate that the ability of pupils is broadly average. All pupils are identified as having SpLD, mainly dyslexia and dyspraxia, but also including some with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autistic spectrum condition. There are 101 pupils in the school who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for four pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers.

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. 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 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The 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.

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](#).

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the junior school, 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 Pupils take GCSE examinations in their final year at the school. The small numbers involved prevent reliable comparison with national averages, but inspection evidence confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 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

2.13 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.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.15 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.17 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage 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.

2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.19 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

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 of all abilities, many of whom have had limited success in other educational settings, make excellent progress.
- Pupils respond well to the school's specialist teaching and therapy, overcoming barriers presented by their SpLD and consequently achieve above previous expectations.
- Pupils' excellent academic and non-academic successes allow them to take assured next steps in their learning when they leave the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent, they demonstrate initiative, independence, responsibility and determination in tackling their individual learning challenges.

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

- Pupils develop increasing self-confidence and self-esteem which makes them happy and successful learners.
- Pupils' social development is excellent, they work cooperatively and collaboratively, supporting, encouraging and appreciating each other's efforts and achievements.
- Pupils become determined and aspirational regarding the next stages in their lives.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent; they understand and deal positively with their emotional responses to life's challenges, and relate to others with respect.

Recommendation

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following improvement:

- Ensure that all pupils can reach their full potential by further developing and refining the assessment of their progress.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Pupils of all ages and abilities make excellent academic progress in relation to their individual starting points on admission to the school. There is variability in the amount of progress made individually by pupils, but the outcomes for all pupils are excellent when their learning difficulties and previous

limited success and sometimes prolonged periods of school non-attendance are taken into account. Pupils quickly make up for lost time in their academic development because the closely coordinated teaching, educational psychology and therapy team work very effectively on what is most important for each of them. Pupils who experience difficulties regarding memorising, or speed in processing information, are helped to adopt strategies that ameliorate these barriers to learning, and they then progress much more rapidly in their studies. Parents commented in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they had seen marked improvements in their children's learning within a few weeks of joining the school. Pupils said that the school had transformed their ability to study within a short time of starting. The school's data on pupils' progress support these views and the inspection team agrees that this is the case.

- 3.6 Junior pupils achieve very well because leaders and staff recognise that within each year group individual pupils may be working at different levels that do not correspond to expected age-related norms. Teaching is skilfully adjusted to take account of these variations, whilst expectations regarding outcomes for all pupils remain high. As a result, these younger pupils make excellent progress relative to their starting points in all subjects. This is also because the school has ensured that as well as giving due focus to the core skills of literacy and numeracy, the curriculum remains broad and balanced. This means that all junior pupils achieve across a comprehensive range of subject content. Those who achieve sufficiently well are able to return to mainstream settings when they are ready to do so with the benefit of a suitably wide learning experience.
- 3.7 In the senior school, pupils' achievement is excellent in relation to their individual starting points and abilities. Pupils work towards GCSEs in the first instance, but if this appears unsuitable for some, an alternative pathway leading to an entry-level qualification is followed. Pupils pursue the most appropriate programmes of study matched to their needs and abilities at their own pace. They are supported by teaching and therapy which focuses very closely on their SpLD and is ambitiously aspirational on their behalf. As a result, pupils gain appropriate accredited outcomes by the end of Year 11 and are well prepared to build on their achievements in their next educational settings, many going on to gain A levels, first and post-graduate degrees. The school is refining its assessment procedures further to ensure that pupils' progress is as closely monitored and evaluated as possible so that pupils can always be assured of receiving the most helpful feedback and teaching in order to reach their potential.
- 3.8 Pupils deal with their SpLD purposefully, employing the strategies and techniques that teaching and therapy staff have helped them to bring to their learning. For example, pupils use personalised strategies to support the retention of vocabulary and organisation of their writing and achieve more readily in their studies as a result. In a touch typing lesson, pupils displayed excellent skills, motivated by their understanding that their progress in this activity would enable them to engage in writing activities more successfully in other subjects. Pupils' competent use of information and communication technology (ICT) across subjects enables them to engage with tasks in ways that reduce the restrictions caused by their SpLD. For example, pupils can use reading applications to decode and comprehend text, or utilise voice activated word processing. Pupils make good use of the lessons learned in the study skills curriculum, applying the guidance effectively within their subject topics. Pupils develop their communication and higher-order thinking skills very well because the school's emphasis on helping them overcome barriers to their learning frees them to explore subjects in more depth. For example, during a poetry lesson, pupils sensitively and collaboratively inferred and hypothesised about meaning in the text.
- 3.9 Pupils say that they can rely on teaching and therapy staff to be working closely together in their best interests. They readily refer to these staff in order to improve their approach to learning tasks and achieve more as a result. In a literacy lesson, pupils showed excellent levels of concentration, facilitated skilfully by teaching which was sensitive to individual pupils' needs, and informed by specific advice from therapy staff. Pupils were encouraged to move around at intervals so that they could have suitable respite from focused tasks, thereby maintaining good engagement overall. Individual pupils'

achievement is enhanced by the consistent use by staff of individual education plans (IEPs) which are created collaboratively by teaching and therapy staff in consultation with special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) and reviewed termly. Pupils' excellent ability to tackle barriers to learning caused by their SpLD are further enabled by one-to-one support sessions. It is also strengthened by the school's close liaison with parents regarding how they can build on their children's learning outside of school.

- 3.10 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Some told the inspectors that in previous settings they had felt afraid to take risks in their learning for fear of making mistakes, or struggled with new challenges because their basic skills were underdeveloped. In contrast, they are now fully engaged in their learning, ask questions when they are unsure and take responsibility for fulfilling tasks. If they get stuck or flounder, they are able to cope because the teaching and therapy staff are alert to their needs and respond quickly and constructively. Pupils appreciate that lessons are planned with their individual needs in mind and so participate with an expectation that they will be able to understand and respond positively to the objectives. Pupils' positivism about learning was exemplified in a science lesson when pupils confidently modelled the structure of an atom using paper plates and skittles. The multi-sensory resources suited their learning style and the staff ensured that the pupils felt entirely comfortable in asking any questions, or in indicating they did not understand something. Additionally, pupils also took advantage of the topic to apply their numerical skills, exploring the relationship between atomic number and atomic mass. Excellent rapport and respect between staff and pupils, in small classes with high staff to pupil ratios, ensure that pupils' daily engagement with lessons is positive and rewarding.
- 3.11 Pupils convey a fundamental trust in the school's respect for and understanding of their learning needs, which is actively promoted by the school's senior leadership and fully endorsed by the governing body. The school's aims and values, which include a focus on building pupils' academic strengths through specialist techniques, are fulfilled very effectively. In their questionnaire responses, parents and pupils approved highly of the school's empathic approach to assisting academic progress, and of the effectiveness of the staff team.
- 3.12 Pupils achieve very well non-academically. They have won national dyslexic football tournaments, participated successfully in national art competitions and national enterprise challenges. They play regularly in sports events against other schools, including non-specialist settings, and are positive about competing even when they may be disadvantaged by aspects of their SpLD. The school offers a suitable range and choice of lunchtime clubs, educational visits and after school activities, and has taken necessary account of balancing such provision with the demands that many of the pupils face as a result of relatively long journey times between home and school and the daily challenges within their academic learning; consequently, pupils are able to engage successfully in extra-curricular activities on a basis that works for them individually and their overall achievement is enhanced substantially.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 On joining the school, pupils often display learned helplessness and have adopted fear-based task avoidance strategies. Individual pupils may take different lengths of time to recover from these setbacks, but the school's assessment of their progress in personal development shows that they all make substantial advances in this regard, often quite quickly. They become increasingly more confident, effective and happy learners, and consequently their academic and other achievements improve significantly.
- 3.15 In their questionnaire replies, parents expressed much appreciation for the school's role in helping their children re-enter education on a positive footing, and for enabling them to rebuild their lives with new confidence and self-esteem. Pupils of all ages shared with inspectors the profoundly

beneficial impact of coming each day to a school where they are understood and valued by the adults and where they are with peers who share and understand the same challenges in learning. Pupils feel safe and unkindness and bullying amongst pupils are almost unknown. The school's senior leaders actively promote principles and values that underpin this sense of security experienced by pupils, relating with them respectfully and considerately. Staff uphold the same standards in their relationships with pupils and consistently help to fulfil the school's aims through ensuring an encouraging, nurturing ethos in which everyone succeeds. As result, pupils enjoy school life and are ready to give of their best in everything they do.

- 3.16 Pupils develop excellent self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. This is because the school helps them to understand, interpret and regulate their feelings so that they control their reactions to situations and learn to maintain an emotional balance in their daily lives. For pupils who may have previously developed a sense of defeatism when faced with a new challenge, the school provides them with strategies so that they can explain how they are feeling and identify what they can do to improve their performance. As a result, pupils develop a deeper understanding of how their emotional and behavioural responses affect their own progress and the feelings of others, guided by the school's programme of *expected and unexpected behaviours*. In a PSHE lesson, pupils showed excellent self-awareness related to self-motivation and personal energy levels. This was skilfully prompted by teaching which referred to a strategy already incorporated in the pupils' repertoire of self-help techniques. Pupils develop increasing resilience, self-reliance, independence and responsibility for themselves in dealing with academic challenges and in handling personal relationships. Consequently, pupils display well-justified pride in the advances they make in their personal development.
- 3.17 Pupils value and take the opportunities offered by the school to be self-determining and in charge of their daily school experiences. They manage and take responsibility for their own time organisation in school with reference to diaries which signal deadlines. Pupils select after school homework club and other activity clubs if they wish, demonstrating thoughtful decision-making about pursuing their preferred personal interests. They take good advantage of tutorial time-management advice in order to resolve any issues in their daily school schedules.
- 3.18 Pupils contribute to and maintain a respectful, friendly, well-behaved community. They are considerate of each other and of staff, and this regard is mirrored in adults' relationships with pupils. Pupils overcome emotional challenges very successfully because small form groups allow them to explore issues with their tutors. In addition, teachers and therapists help them to understand the impact of their verbal and non-verbal communication on others and to improve their relationship skills accordingly. Pupils also adhere well to the school's *credit and debit* system of self-management of behaviour which provides constructive feedback on how to interpret and control personal frustrations and relate productively with others.
- 3.19 When joining the school, pupils' social awareness and ability to work effectively with others have sometimes been limited by the previous difficulties they have faced. They readily respond to the school's teaching and therapeutic approach which fosters effective social communication that underpins their ability to work with others, to solve problems together and achieve common goals. This was exemplified during a whole school assembly when the debating club very effectively promoted collaboration and presentational skills, focusing on respect, tolerance and listening to others.
- 3.20 The excellent progress that pupils make in gaining confidence in social settings enables them to extend their reinvigorated sense of purpose into activities which allow them to contribute positively to others within the school and the wider community. For instance, at classroom level, pupils are empathic to peers who may be struggling to participate in an activity and spontaneously, patiently and supportively help them to join in. At school council, pupils represent their classmates, expressing their views and suggestions for innovation within school. Older pupils act as 'buddies' to prospective pupils during their assessment visit. Pupils determine which local and national charities to support and decide on how to fund raise, demonstrating a sincere commitment to improving the lives of others.

- 3.21 Pupils demonstrate excellent respect and appreciation of diversity between cultures and regarding individual's differences. During a whole school assembly, pupils expressed a strong commitment to the importance of valuing one another, of regard for democratic and political institutions, for animal rights and the respect due to the natural world. During the inspection the 'word of the week' was 'respect', and the pupils excelled in showing how they embraced its importance. Pupils' respectful attitudes are strengthened through the example of leaders and staff who provide excellent role models in this regard. Parents value this characteristic of the school, as expressed in their questionnaire comments. Pupils also demonstrate an insightful spiritual understanding, for instance appreciating how language in poetry can move, enthrall and challenge the reader, and when considering the distinction between material wealth and happiness as personified by Scrooge and Bob Cratchit in Dicken's *A Christmas Carol*.
- 3.22 Staying safe and healthy is well understood by pupils. Some pupils travel independently to and from school, using public transport safely, supported by suitable training. This is testament to the school's endeavours to assist pupils' preparation for life after they leave school. Pupils learn how to keep safe and what to do if they get into difficulty because the school ensures it assesses each pupil's needs in this regard and puts guidance and any necessary support in place. Pupils know how to stay safe when online, as seen when they demonstrated their secure learning about social media images and texts in an ICT lesson. They also have good understanding regarding how to stay healthy, physically and mentally, as displayed during a PSHE lesson, when they discussed making sensible and positive lifestyle choices.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with the chair of governors, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Andrew Farren	Reporting inspector
Mrs Julie Lowe	Accompanying reporting inspector
Mr Michael Clennett	Compliance team inspector (Former deputy head, GSA school)
Mr David Edwards	Team inspector (Director of studies, IAPS school)
Mr Dominic Tomalin	Team inspector (Principal, ISA school)