

Material change inspection report

5 to 6 February 2026

Heathfield School

London Road

Ascot

SL5 8BQ

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

Inspection outcome

The school has submitted a material change request to become co-educational from September 2026.

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school Standards if the material change is implemented. It is recommended that the material change be approved.

Inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

ISSR paragraphs 2, 2A and 3(j)

1. Leaders have shaped a curriculum which covers all required areas of learning and enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers plan lessons that are appropriately sequenced. The schemes of work for each subject show where careers education is embedded and where there are opportunities for teachers to guide their pupils in understanding fundamental British values. Subject leaders have considered appropriately where and how schemes of work may need to change when the school becomes co-educational. For example, teachers are extending the range of texts to be studied in English further to reflect the experience of male pupils. In planning for co-education, leaders have considered the further staff training that may be needed to meet the needs of all pupils effectively.
2. Leaders ensure that all pupils access the curriculum fully. This is supported by the school's accessibility plan. Teachers know their pupils' needs well and adapt their teaching effectively to meet pupils' individual needs. Pupils show good levels of engagement and make good progress across the range of subjects. They collaborate well with each other and celebrate each other's achievements.
3. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified early. Specialist staff share relevant information which class teachers use to support pupils effectively. Leaders ensure that pupils who have SEND are supported effectively in class so that they make good progress from their starting points. Leaders with responsibility for boarding and boarding house parents work closely with the academic staff to ensure that their support for pupils who have SEND in their academic work is well matched to their needs.
4. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress. The imaginative and pragmatic use of pupils' first languages in creating resources for pupils with less prior experience of English is effective in promoting their self-confidence and supporting English language acquisition and fluency. The use of parallel texts and specialised vocabulary lists by teachers across the curriculum is effective.
5. Specialist teachers provide pupils with an effective course of lessons in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). Topics are frequently reviewed by leaders and staff to ensure that the programme remains relevant and that it is specifically contextualised to the needs of the school's pupils. Lessons alert pupils appropriately to dangers ranging from extremism to fraud. Teachers also explore themes with pupils, including women's suffrage and respect for the democratic process. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to refine the PSHE programme when the school is co-educational whilst retaining the universally applicable key messages of the programme.
6. The effective programme for relationships and sex education (RSE) is well designed and age-appropriate and reflects statutory guidance. Pupils learn about key topics from consent to the basis of healthy relationships. Leaders consult parents about sensitive subjects and policy changes and

make them aware of their right to withdraw their child. Leaders have ensured that future planning takes account of the needs of male and female pupils, with some lessons likely to be separated by sex.

7. Leaders ensure that pupils follow an appropriate programme of economic education. Pupils acquire skills and understanding for budgeting, saving and the use of credit. In mathematics lessons on percentages, links are made with understanding personal finance. In effective lessons in the PSHE programme, specialist teachers lead lessons on elements of business.
8. A suitable programme for careers education is in place, including in lessons in PSHE alongside presentations in assemblies and consideration of careers within curriculum subjects. Staff with responsibility in this area offer individualised support for pupils. They help pupils consider a range of pathways that reflect their interests and aspirations. Former pupils and parents visit the school and expand the pupils' experience of careers. The school offers virtual work experience.
9. Staff provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are age-appropriate. Leaders have planned these to ensure that there will be suitable activities in place for male and female pupils. Activities range from the Athena society, which debates topical issues, to sports such as lacrosse and climbing. Other societies develop pupils' spiritual awareness or their creative skills, such as for podcasting. Pupils suggest new activities and are given opportunities to run them, thereby developing organisational and motivational skills.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

ISSR paragraph 5(b)(vi); NMS 3

10. Leaders have established a culture in which the diversity of pupils' backgrounds is celebrated through a range of events, including those to mark religious festivals and global events. Individual cultures are recognised on the school's 'Culture and Diversity Day'. Lessons in the PSHE programme develop pupils' understanding of the facets of identity, such as when Year 8 discuss issues linked to immigration.
11. Leaders carefully consider the needs of boarders. They are aware of the boarders' diverse cultural backgrounds and work hard to ensure that all pupils in the boarding houses feel included. New pupils who arrive at the school from abroad, including those with less prior experience of English, are helped to settle well and quickly. Boarding and day pupils form respectful relationships with each other.
12. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 7, 8, 9 and 20

13. Staff understand the school's procedures for safeguarding well and apply them consistently. Staff with boarding responsibilities understand their obligations as set out in the safeguarding policies. Staff show secure understanding of reporting lines and how to respond should a concern be raised. When a concern is raised, they respond quickly.
14. Higher-level training is in place for those with designated safeguarding responsibilities. The safeguarding team understand the contextual factors relating to safeguarding at the school. These include a range of emotional and mental health concerns, and the school has expanded its provision to mitigate the risks in these areas with the provision of a counsellor and increased numbers of staff trained in mental health first aid. 'Flourishing' lessons, which form part of the curriculum, are

effective in promoting positive attitudes to mental health. Leaders draw up suitable individual risk assessments for pupils with particular vulnerabilities.

15. Governors' oversight of safeguarding is appropriate. External support from the proprietor, the Mill Hill School Foundation, provides guidance and support to school leaders. This includes visits to the school to meet with and train individuals. Governors audit the processes in place for safeguarding pupils and review recruitment procedures, including the single central record of appointments.
16. Staff with particular responsibility for safeguarding work effectively with external agencies including children's services and the police. Leaders ensure that they inform the local authority when a pupil joins or leaves the school at a non-standard transition point.
17. Leaders keep suitable safeguarding records. They ensure that appropriate protocols are in place so that they are kept confidentially, in line with the statutory guidance. Records include details of actions taken and leaders' rationale.
18. Leaders understand the particular vulnerabilities of boarders and are appropriately vigilant. They have developed detailed risk assessments for boarders. These cover a wide range of risks, including those related to supervision in the boarding houses. Leaders and staff take appropriate action to reduce risks that are identified.
19. There are clear rotas for supervising boarders outside of teaching time. There are allocated members of boarding staff for each area of the boarding site and pupils know who to contact. These specialist staff understand their roles clearly and are appropriately trained.
20. The school maintains clear policies for the care of boarders who have medical conditions. The accommodation provides appropriate facilities and privacy for boarders who are ill and leaders have planned suitable adaptations to ensure that this will continue when the school becomes co-educational.
21. Pupils know how and with whom to raise a concern, including anonymously. They understand the school's procedures for responding to an emergency. There is a clear system of communication by telephone so that boarders can always contact a member of staff on duty. They are aware of the option for consulting the independent person for boarding if they have a concern.
22. Effective lessons in computing and in PSHE teach pupils know how to stay safe online. Presentations by external speakers develop pupils' knowledge of other aspects of safety, such as issues of personal safety during a gap year and safer driving.
23. The school's internet filtering and monitoring processes are secure and include monitoring digital storage. Safeguarding and information and communication technology (ICT) specialists receive alerts, should someone attempt to access any unsuitable material, including during the school holidays. The system is tested frequently and reports are shared with senior leaders.
24. The school's processes for the management of allegations against staff, including low-level concerns, are effective. Staff understand the importance of self-referral. Low-level concerns are logged appropriately. Leaders monitor any patterns that may occur.
25. The school's robust approach to safeguarding includes the provision of a 24-hour phone line that is accessible to all adults should they have a concern. Safeguarding is a standing item on agendas for the leadership team and wider staff meetings so that staff receive regular updates about any changes to guidance and are appropriately informed about any current issues.
26. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

ISSR paragraph 23 and 30; NMS 4

27. Leaders have planned for appropriate toilet, washing and shower facilities for male pupils with clear signage provision to complement existing suitable arrangements.
28. The school provides comfortable and high-quality sleeping accommodation, which is well organised, furnished and managed. The accommodation provides appropriate privacy. For instance, pupils have access to individual washrooms and personal storage areas. Leaders work hard to accommodate pupils' preferences, including allowing pupils to share accommodation where they wish to.
29. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

30. The school's child protection and safeguarding policy is a foundation-wide policy, updated to reflect recent changes to statutory guidance. It is published on the school's website.
31. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraph 34; NMS 2

32. Leaders have the appropriate skills and knowledge to promote pupils' wellbeing across the school's provision, including in the boarding houses. The school's culture is one where pupils are known as individuals from an early stage and it is well placed to support their wellbeing.
33. The governors of the Mill Hill School Foundation exercise effective oversight of the work of the leadership team so that they meet the Standards consistently. Members of the governing body visit the school regularly so that they understand the lived experience of pupils and staff at the school.
34. Leaders have carefully considered how having male boarders in the school will affect existing relationships, and they have thought carefully about how to support all pupils at this time of change.
35. Leaders undertake effective self-evaluation. For the proposed change, leaders have carried out a process of consultation. Leaders have risk assessed the proposed change appropriately.
36. Leaders' planning for co-education is suitable. The flexibility of the current boarding provision will allow it to be re-purposed efficiently. Refinements to curriculum planning where necessary, such as for RSE, are already in place. Leaders' planning shows that they have a breadth of understanding of the consequences of the proposed change and have strategies to accommodate male pupils effectively, to support their emotional and pastoral needs, and to integrate them into the school.
37. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

School details

School	Heathfield School
Department for Education number	867/6000
Registered charity number	1064758
Address	Heathfield School London Road Ascot Berkshire SL5 8BQ
Phone number	01344 898343
Email address	administration@heathfieldschool.net
Website	www.heathfieldschool.net
Proprietor	The Mill Hill School Foundation
Chair	Mr Elliott Lipton
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Williams
Age range	11 to 18
Number of pupils	157
Number of boarding pupils	73
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 October 2025

Information about the school

38. Heathfield School is a day and boarding school for female pupils located in Ascot, Berkshire. The school is a member of the Mill Hill School Foundation and a registered charity.
39. There are four boarding houses, all situated on the main school site. The houses are allocated by age: one for pupils aged 11 to 13 years; one for pupils aged 13 to 15 years; one for pupils from 15 to 17 years old; and one for pupils aged 17 and 18 years.
40. The school has identified 55 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
41. The school has identified 20 pupils for whom English is an additional language.
42. The school states that its aims are to support all its pupils in fulfilling their potential academically with an additional focus on character, community and co-curricular pursuits. The school seeks to foster confidence and self-belief in its pupils, encouraging them to be happy and healthy and keen to succeed.

Purpose of the material change inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the Department for Education to make a material change to the school's provision. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about whether the school is likely to meet the Independent School Standards and National Minimum Standards for boarding schools requirements if the material change is implemented.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

5 to 6 February 2026

43. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for two days.

44. Inspection activities included

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- tour of the school site to observe boarding provision
- discussions with the proprietor
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the boarding houses accompanied by staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

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

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

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