



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

FAIRLEY HOUSE SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Fairley House School

Full Name of 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 7976 5456		
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Email Address	jm@fairleyhouse.org.uk		
Head	Ms Jacqueline Murray		
Chair of Governors	Ms Elizabeth Morrell		
Age Range	5 to 14		
Total Number of Pupils	155		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (121 boys; 34 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 110
	3-5 (EYFS):	0	11-16: 45
Number of Day Pupils	155		
Inspection date	4 May 2010 to 5 May 2010		
Final (team) visit	7 Jun 2010 to 9 Jun 2010		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in April 2004.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard 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.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Fairley House School is a co-educational specialist day school for pupils from 5 to 14. Founded in 1982, it provides for pupils with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties. It is a registered charity administered by a board of governors, most of whom are former parents.
- 1.2 Since the last inspection in 2004 the junior department, now housed in a former Victorian primary school in Lambeth, and the senior department, occupying a converted church in Causton Street, Pimlico, have exchanged sites. The number of therapists has been increased, with therapy available for all key pupils.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 155 pupils were on the school roll, of whom 34 were girls. Forty-five pupils were in the junior department, in Years 2 to 4. All pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, with some of them having additional needs. Individual support is planned for all pupils, of whom 40 have statements of special educational need; 38 of these pupils are funded by local authorities
- 1.4 The school only admits pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) if their English is of sufficient fluency to determine that they have specific learning difficulties. At the time of the inspection two EAL pupils were on the school roll and received extra support.
- 1.5 The school aims to transform the lives of children with specific learning difficulties and to provide encouragement for their families. Through multi-sensory working it aims to meet pupils' individual needs. It seeks to return pupils to mainstream education after two to three years, although those with statements are more likely to stay longer. The majority of pupils start in September, but entry can be at any point in the school year, and pupils leave at different times of the year. The school also aims to influence the lives of families beyond the school community who have children with specific learning difficulties, through research, training, teaching and advocacy.
- 1.6 In order to meet the criteria for admission, pupils must be of at least average ability. However, the ability range is very wide, with some pupils being of extremely high ability.

- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Junior Department

School	NC name
Willow	Year 2
Maple	Year 3
Oak	Year 4
Pine	Year 4

Senior Department

School	NC name
Wright	Year 5
Branson	Year 5
Roddick	Year 5
Einstein	Year 6
Ford	Year 6
Zephaniah	Year 6
Redgrave	Year 7
Picasso	Year 7
Cruise	Year 8
Lennon	Year 8
Radcliffe	Year 9

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Pupils make good progress overall. In relation to their specific learning difficulties they make outstanding progress in literacy. Although many pupils enter the school having experienced failure, and with a poor attitude, this is transformed into a positive approach and a determination to succeed. They discover the joy of learning. The strong set of basic skills which they acquire lays a firm foundation for the future.
- 2.2 Their personal development is outstanding. Pupils grow in self-esteem and develop sensitivity to the needs of others. They care for each other and extend this to their care for the wider world, demonstrating keen appreciation of environmental issues.
- 2.3 The governance, leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The total commitment shown by all to the ethos and aims of the school is a key factor in its success. Pupils are respected and valued and emphasis is placed on catering for their complex needs in the most effective way. The school has developed strong links with its parents and the community and is playing an increasingly important role in sharing its expertise in the education of pupils with specific learning difficulties. The programme of lectures organised by the school is open to staff from other schools and professionals working in the field, as well as to parents.
- 2.4 Since the last inspection the school has been transformed. It now operates as a single entity with two departments, both suitably accommodated on their respective sites.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 2.5 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended.

(ii) Recommended action

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Endeavour to implement the plan to provide an outside area for quiet reflection for the older pupils.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 Pupils, including those with statements, achieve good standards and make good progress overall. However, in relation to their difficulties, their achievement and progress in literacy are outstanding. The aim of the school is that they should return to mainstream schooling as soon as possible, and the improvement they make in English enables most pupils to do this after two to three years.
- 3.2 The pupils themselves appreciate the importance of improving their skills in literacy and work hard to achieve this. They are keenly aware of their own progress in each area of literacy, since reading and spelling ages are shared with them, and they know what they need to work on to improve further. In discussion, pupils spoke with pride of their success in increasing their reading fluency, and the difference it had made to their lives. They are equally determined in mathematics. They recognise the importance of oral achievement and learn to record in a variety of genres to suit both the task and their own learning style. The enthusiastic participation and depth of knowledge shown in a history lesson on France in the fifteenth century demonstrated pupils' interest and confidence. They involve themselves wholeheartedly in role play, and the overall standard of their artwork is exceptional, with many pupils showing marked creative and dramatic flair. Pupils' work, at both school sites, is imaginatively displayed and demonstrates their high level of achievement in design and technology (DT) and art, in a wide variety of styles and media.
- 3.3 Once a pupil is reading at an appropriate level, touch typing is introduced and pupils, particularly those in the senior department, show confidence and competence in their use of information communications technology (ICT). They employ it to good effect, not only to enable them to access information, but also to help compensate for difficulties with writing. In a geography lesson in Year 9, pupils researched tourist attractions effectively by using the internet and then quickly designed their own posters advertising them. Pupils benefit from the closely structured programme of study, and are furnished with opportunities for investigative work. For example, articles on current affairs are gleaned from newspapers and used as a basis for the study of persuasive writing.
- 3.4 Pupils acquire strong strategies with which to develop their learning, and they recognise the value of these foundations. They appreciate the need to listen carefully and to concentrate, and they have a positive approach to learning.
- 3.5 Throughout the school pupils are supportive and helpful towards each other. They recognise the difficulties which others have and work co-operatively to help them to overcome problems and minimise stress.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.6 The curriculum and extra-curricular provision make an outstanding contribution to the education of the pupils. The curriculum is tailored most effectively to their special needs, fulfilling the school's aim. It offers a broad coverage of all areas of learning, but with the greatest emphasis placed on speech and literacy. Numeracy also has a strong focus. Work in other subjects is weighted towards practical and

oral experiences, enabling pupils to acquire knowledge and skills whilst limiting tasks that require recording. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, many of which take place during the school day because of transport difficulties after school for pupils travelling long distances.

- 3.7 The curriculum is based on the national curriculum but adapted to address the particular difficulties which the pupils experience. The school sets for reading and spelling by ability rather than age and this has a positive impact on performance. Recently the school has started to group by age for writing, and this is increasing attainment in this area. A similar system is in place for numeracy, enabling close targeting of pupils' areas of weakness and greater challenge for the more able.
- 3.8 A wide range of therapies is included in the curriculum, with the emphasis being on intensive intervention in the first few months. Pupils are not withdrawn from the core subjects for additional provision, but an effective system of support from occupational and speech and language therapists enables individual help to be given throughout the school day. This specialised support is highly effective.
- 3.9 Activities outside the classroom successfully broaden opportunities for pupils. Visits to the school by authors and artists, many of whom are dyslexic, focus on the creativity often accompanying dyslexia. Pupils make good use of the school's location in central London, visiting places of interest such as galleries and museums. An interview with pupils, in which they responded to comments regarding dyslexia made by an MP, was shown on television as part of a national news programme; the school principal was also interviewed on the radio. Such opportunities to influence the view of the wider community in relation to specific learning difficulties are grasped readily.
- 3.10 Sports matches are played against other local schools, with the emphasis being on participation and enjoyment, and the further building of confidence. Individual instrumental tuition and the choir and music groups offer opportunities for pupils to develop and display their musicality. Major dramatic productions provide a further extension of the curriculum, and pupils share their achievements in a range of performances. At the time of the inspection all the pupils in the senior department were involved in rehearsals for a production of Alice in Wonderland. The residential trip to the Ardeche in 2009, for Years 7 to 9, was highly successful and a similar trip to Normandy has been planned for this academic year.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 The quality of the teaching and therapy is outstanding and is characterised by excellent analysis of the needs of the pupils. All teachers are specialists in learning difficulties and this, together with the inclusion in the staff of full-time therapists, is a critical factor in the excellent standard of provision. A multi-sensory approach is adopted throughout the curriculum. Planning is imaginative, and offers a wide variety of strategies and resources so that pupils can adopt those most suited to their learning styles. The inspirational nature of the teaching enables the school to fulfil its aim of transforming the lives of its pupils.
- 3.12 The comprehensive two-day assessment of each prospective pupil is used to design the programme for the additional support offered and determines the strategies for intervention. Individual education plans (IEPs) are drawn up for every pupil and these are shared with parents. Regular review meetings are based on the detailed system of assessment, which facilitates close tracking of all aspects of pupils' development.

- 3.13 The understanding of pupils' complex needs, whether academic, physical or pastoral, enables meticulous lesson planning. The generous staffing ratio permits much individual and small group work to take place. Teachers use correct technical terms and introduce them to pupils methodically, helping to extend their vocabulary. The calm approach of the teachers, and their excellent strategies for behaviour management, help to build the confidence of pupils and aid learning. Pupils are given constant encouragement and praise.
- 3.14 The team of therapists offers expert and patient aid as required. Large equipment for occupational therapy is accessed at the senior department, but both parts of the school are well equipped to cater for all the pupils' needs. The recent introduction of a carousel for special provision, linked to curriculum topics, is an exciting innovation. Teachers and therapists work closely together in these sessions, sharing information and ideas to the benefit of their pupils.
- 3.15 Teaching in literacy is closely structured, with teachers and therapists having input as necessary. Planning is tailored to ensure maximum progress. Setting by needs across several years, in very small groups, permits close targeting of the teaching of spelling patterns. In mathematics, teachers provide a wide range of practical resources. In a lesson on division in the junior department, pupils used counters, number lines, drawings, their own fingers and interlinking blocks to make calculations.
- 3.16 Experiments in science are arranged so that pupils can support each other and aim for accuracy. Emphasis is placed on understanding through practical experience and discussion. The recommendation in the last inspection that the quality of teaching in science should be improved has been fully met.
- 3.17 In all subjects teachers encourage active participation in lessons through role play and discussion. In these ways pupils' difficulties are minimised and their strengths emphasised.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 Pupils make outstanding progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and awareness. The noticeable increase in their self-confidence, after even a short period at the school, enables them to reach out to understand and help others. In the pre-inspection questionnaire pupils reported that they were taught to respect each other and strive to do their best.
- 4.2 The spiritual awareness of pupils is well developed. Their sensitivity and creativity are pronounced, and are demonstrated strongly in their work in art, DT, music and drama. Assemblies are times for quiet reflection but also help to foster the spiritual life of the school community. Pupils showed great joy in the refurbishment of the sensory garden at the junior department and were delighted to see the return of the fish to their pond.
- 4.3 A strong moral code prevails. Many of the pupils have experience from their previous schools of being bullied because of their learning difficulties, and recognise the damage this caused. They are intent on developing an atmosphere of support and encouragement. This is aided by the staff, who are quick to praise and offer patient help, and by the system of rewarding positive behaviour. The programme of personal, social, health and economic education and citizenship is carefully designed to reinforce this approach. Pupils described a lesson in which each of them tore part of a paper figure and made an unkind comment, then tried to put the figure back together so that it was as perfect as before. They explained that bullying had the same effect, with the most heartfelt apology failing to repair all the damage caused to the victim.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is excellent. They are polite and helpful and build harmonious relationships with their peers and with adults. In all years pupils were observed working well in pairs or small groups and showed courtesy towards the views of others. This atmosphere of inclusion extends to their cultural development. Festivals and special occasions from a variety of faiths are celebrated in school and pupils show good knowledge of the main world religions. Recent work on South Africa included sensitive discussion of apartheid as well as traditional songs and drama, enabling pupils to experience cultural issues through the same multi-disciplinary approach adopted in subject teaching. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and are committed to raising funds for a variety of charities.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.5 The school makes outstanding provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils. External specialists for areas such as health and safety and fire risk analysis support and enhance the care provided by staff. All analysis is detailed and regular. The comprehensive knowledge of each pupil's needs ensures that planning covers a wide range of risks.
- 4.6 The strong relationships which prevail at every level are encouraged through the anti-bullying policy, the system of positive behaviour management and the calm approach of the staff. Anti-bullying measures are taken very seriously and pupils report that instances of unkindness are rare. Pupils can choose a mentor from among the staff, and some commented that they had found their mentors most helpful.

- 4.7 Safeguarding measures are stringent and are closely monitored to ensure their effectiveness. Provision for pupils who are unwell is suitable, with well-appointed medical rooms on both sites, and many trained first aiders available on the staff. Attendance and admission registers are suitably maintained.
- 4.8 The school has an appropriate plan to improve access for those with disabilities, although the plethora of stairs on the Causton Street site limits the possibilities for improvement.
- 4.9 Pupils appreciate the benefit of exercise and are given good guidance on healthy eating. Lunches are varied and nutritious and include vegetarian options.
- 4.10 Recommendations in the previous report relating to the accommodation for older pupils, and provision of more specialist areas, have all been fully addressed by the reorganisation of the two departments of the school.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is outstanding. Governors are deeply committed to its success and to influencing the wider community in relation to specific learning difficulties. The governing body includes members with an impressive range of expertise, a number of whom were formerly parents of pupils at the school and therefore have personal understanding of the difficulties faced by current pupils and their families.
- 5.2 They have excellent oversight of the school and have drawn up an ambitious strategic plan for the next ten years. They take the view that pupils with specific learning difficulties merit the best possible teachers, therapists and resources and this influences every aspect of their role. The whole school is generously staffed and resourced. Governors are responsive and react positively to advice. Following the last inspection they made radical changes to the organisation of the school. These have been most successful and have paved the way for future development.
- 5.3 Governors are closely involved in all aspects of school life and in the professional programme, which is constantly being extended. They attend lectures and meetings with specialists in the field of specific learning difficulties, as well as supporting school functions, and visiting and observing during the working day. They are keen to promote inclusivity and are aware of the need to structure the parents' association so that all feel welcomed and able to participate.
- 5.4 All aspects of their financial and legal responsibilities are discharged with the same meticulous attention which is devoted to the care of the pupils. Consultants are employed when appropriate. For example, the health and safety consultant regularly visits the school and advises governors and management. The policy and procedures in place for safe recruitment and all safeguarding issues are robust and are implemented methodically. Documentation is in good order and up to date.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.5 The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. Total commitment is shown to the cause of pupils with specific learning difficulties. The emphasis on building pupils' confidence is most effective. Successful adults who are dyslexic or who have other learning difficulties serve as role models for the pupils. This inspires them to develop high expectations and ambitions.
- 5.6 Clear educational direction is given, with all members of staff involved in self-evaluation and planning for further improvement. The determination to provide carefully targeted provision for each pupil influences every aspect of the school's work.
- 5.7 The detailed assessment made of every pupil's strengths and weaknesses is followed through in the comprehensive tracking system which underpins all the school's work. Although the pupil population is constantly changing, as those who have made sufficient progress move back into mainstream education, and new, underperforming pupils arrive, the ethos remains clear and positive. Encouragement, confidence building and great sensitivity are evident throughout the school.

- 5.8 With the growth in the school and the high ratio of staff to pupils, the staff team also changes, but the effectiveness of recruitment, induction and training is evident in the high standards and dedication achieved. Staff are well aware of the importance of their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The school has thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of all those who work with children and meticulous records are maintained.
- 5.9 All members of the staff team contribute to the warmth and welcome of the school environment. The office team set the standard with their friendly and efficient communication with children and their parents. The school is well maintained, and attractively decorated, with corridors and public areas benefiting from stimulating displays of information and pupils' work. The new library at the senior department offers an attractive environment for study and leisure. The sensory garden at the junior department makes creative use of space and provides a delightful environment for quiet reflection. The school's development plan includes the aim to provide a similar area for older pupils. The recommendation in the previous inspection report to improve liaison between the two school sites has been fulfilled.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.10 The school has forged excellent links with its parents. It has also made a significant contribution to the wider community in promoting the understanding of specific learning difficulties. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed overwhelming satisfaction with the school.
- 5.11 From the time of the initial assessment of the needs of prospective pupils, parents are furnished with detailed information and supported through the process of entry. The time devoted by senior management to preparation for tribunals and the outstanding advice offered to ensure a suitable outcome were particularly praised. Meetings to discuss IEPs and review pupils' progress are carefully arranged, with a high standard of analysis being shared with parents. Parents consider that meetings are well organised.
- 5.12 Parents recognise the value of the school's approach towards their children's confidence and self-esteem. In the pre-inspection questionnaire parents expressed delight at the change in their children's attitude. Comments such as, 'His belief in his own ability to make progress is reignited, which is due to the success he experiences at school,' and, 'I cannot believe how far he has progressed. It has been life-changing for him,' demonstrate the transformation achieved.
- 5.13 The well-designed website, comprehensive reporting system and regular liaison with parents ensure that they are kept well up to date. Documentation about the school is clear and helpful and the weekly newsletter keeps them well informed. Although many families live a long way from the school, information and consultation evenings are strongly supported.
- 5.14 The parents' association provides a valuable forum for support and exchange of ideas. It has an ambitious and successful fundraising programme.
- 5.15 Any concerns which parents may have are dealt with carefully and thoroughly. Excellent record-keeping and a sympathetic approach to the needs of all characterise this process.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with 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 Elisabeth Mimpriss	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Valerie Goode	Assistant Reporting Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Angela Hartill	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Michael Hewett	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)