



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Southbank International School, Hampstead

May 2022

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School's Details

School	Southbank International School, Hampstead			
DfE number	202/6395			
Address	Southbank International School, Hampstead 16 Netherhall Gardens Hampstead London NW3 5TH			
Telephone number	020 7243 3803			
Email address	hampstead@southbank.org			
Headteacher	Mrs Shirley Harwood			
Proprietor	Cognita Schools			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	176			
	EYFS	21	Juniors	155
Inspection dates	24 to 27 May 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Southbank International School Hampstead is a co-educational day school. Southbank International School was founded in 1981 and the Hampstead campus was opened in 1995. It is owned and governed by the Cognita Schools group.
- 1.2 The school is divided into three sections: early childhood, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for pupils aged from three to five years, lower primary for ages five to eight years and upper primary for ages eight to eleven years. Pupils follow the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP).
- 1.3 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school's aim is to challenge pupils academically whilst maintaining a liberal ethos and promoting the values of the International Baccalaureate thus enabling pupils to develop a global outlook. It aims to provide a safe, caring and supportive environment in which pupils are equipped with self-confidence and gain a sense of responsibility, service as action and accountability.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come mainly from a range of professional international families living within a few miles of the school. Assessment data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 41 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia, dyscalculia and other conditions, all of whom receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for 75 pupils, of whom 27 receive additional support from specialist EAL 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. 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 meets the 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 no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

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 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 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.

2.19 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. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Early Childhood 3	Nursery
Early Childhood 4	Reception
Kindergarten	Year 1
Grade 1	Year 2
Grade 2	Year 3
Grade 3	Year 4
Grade 4	Year 5
Grade 5	Year 6

Key findings

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

- Pupils demonstrate outstanding study skills; they display high levels of curiosity and develop strong critical thinking skills.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes towards their learning; they show initiative, independence and collaborate extremely effectively.
- Pupils are highly articulate communicators.
- Pupils show high rates of progress in their learning.

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

- Pupils display excellent social awareness for their age and make a positive contribution to the school and wider community.
- Pupils demonstrate a notably strong appreciation of diversity and a pronounced respect for other cultures.
- Pupils show high levels of self-awareness, confidence and resilience.
- Pupils have a highly developed sense of responsibility for their behaviour.

Recommendation

3.3 The school should make the following improvement.

- Enable the more able pupils to achieve at the highest levels through consistent challenge across 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 From the earliest age pupils' overall progress is strong, their high levels of achievement being well promoted by senior leaders and teachers in their planning and skilful implementation of the curriculum. Pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, who join the school at different ages, make rapid progress. All parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching, including any online provision, enables their child to make progress, and inspection evidence confirms this view. Almost all pupils responding to the questionnaire agreed that their teachers know their subjects well and know how to help them learn. Pupils display a high rate of progress in lessons, although in a few of those observed the pace and challenge was not sufficient for the more able to achieve at the highest level possible. External assessments show that pupils' academic attainment is well above those of pupils in other like schools worldwide. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their transition to senior school. This is evident in their preparation and presentation of extended collaborative inquiries at a level significantly higher than that expected for their age.

3.6 Pupils display excellent levels of knowledge and understanding across the range of their learning. Pupils in Year 1 could explain digraphs when discussing the sounds that letters make and used punctuation accurately in their writing. Older pupils show an excellent grasp of language structure and technique. They can distinguish the difference between similes and metaphors and can explain why writers might use these examples of figurative language. Pupils develop strong inquiry skills in mathematics and science, such as when using time-lapse observations and other data when investigating plant adaptation and plant reproduction. Pupils' knowledge skills and understanding are developed to a high standard through the school's multi-disciplinary approach to the curriculum and high expectations from their teachers. Pupils' display excellent skills in art and music, and creativity is promoted from an early age. Pupils' artwork in a variety of styles and media, from small scale clay models to large scale sea organisms, is outstanding in response to positive encouragement from staff and exposure to art galleries and visiting artists. Pupils' strong musical knowledge and appreciation is advanced through the school's policy that all pupils learn to play a string instrument. Pupils' development of physical education skills is good. They displayed some nimble footwork, dexterity and agility in their outdoor activity and demonstrated excellent knowledge of technique in their athletics lesson. Pupils' final exhibitions, such as on how the scientific process of cloning works, show considerable maturity in the application of their knowledge, understanding and skills.

3.7 Pupils develop sophisticated study skills. They display high levels of curiosity, for example when constructing bridges and towers in an extra-curricular activity. They are highly adept at exploring, researching and using a wide variety of sources to analyse, hypothesise and draw conclusions. In doing so they develop excellent critical thinking skills to create hypotheses that they develop into action points. This was seen in an inquiry into what animal populations need to flourish and what action needs to be taken to secure a future for animals on the planet. Pupils develop proficient study skills in response to teaching which successfully promotes conceptual thinking and provides challenge, motivation and engagement. To this end the school is successful in meeting its stated aim to promote the values of the International Baccalaureate. Pupils use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. 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. This was confirmed in inspection observations, discussions with pupils and staff and scrutiny of pupils' work. Pupils' ability to link their analytical skills with human and

social awareness is excellent. Pupils demonstrated this when explaining why they decided to read a chosen poem at a particular tempo whilst also considering the importance of sustainability and impact of deforestation in their response.

- 3.8 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They work with high levels of interest, enthusiasm and engagement. Pupils are intellectually curious and willing to persevere when challenged in the knowledge that they are well supported by their teachers. Pupils' ability to work either independently or collaboratively is excellent, such as when pupils consider a range of possible outcomes when problem solving before settling upon the most accurate. Young children show highly positive attitudes and enjoyment in their chosen activities. They organise themselves effectively, such as when role-playing caring for the babies in the hospital. Pupils invariably show excellent initiative and independence in their responsible attitude to doing the very best they can for themselves and the group. They are keen to learn and understand how their learning is relevant in the world, and staff facilitate this effectively by arranging discussions with professionals, such as a highland farmer. Pupils show effective independence with their learning and are highly productive in individual work. Within a unit of inquiry on engineering, an immense amount of individual research was made into designing paper planes to the finest specifications of aerodynamics. Pupils are open to addressing their areas for improvement and welcome and appreciate the guidance that they receive from staff to enable their progression.
- 3.9 Pupils are highly eloquent and effective communicators. They listen attentively and speak articulately using sophisticated vocabulary for their age. Pupils speak positively about the preparation they are given to speak in public and how they value the support received from their teachers. In lessons seen, pupils listened thoughtfully and processed their peers' observations before adding their own ideas, helping to build stronger viewpoints for the class. From an early age, pupils demonstrate strong letter writing skills, such as when pupils in Year 1 wrote to a friend who was leaving to share favourite memories of their friendship. Well planned teaching successfully promotes the development of language and communication that underpins pupils' excellent viewing and presentation skills. This was evident in the coherence with which Year 6 pupils explained their exhibition inquiries to visitors and when sharing their knowledge and understanding of the impact of communication when inquiring into misinformation, disinformation and reliable reporting.
- 3.10 Pupils show strong numerical skills and use mathematical language assuredly. Young children in Reception described a million with six noughts and discussed infinity, and pupils in Year 5 spoke of equation strings with conviction. Confidence in handling numbers and mental arithmetic from an early age is instilled and developed with the help of supportive teaching that gently encourages and gives meaningful praise. Pupils' application of number skills and their use of bar modelling enables them to successfully solve complex mathematical word problems. They apply a range of number, measuring, geometry and problem-solving skills effectively to a variety of situations. Pupils incorporate mathematics elements into their inquiries to excellent effect, such as when using statistics on speed, distance travelled and percentage improvement to analyse the effect of performance technology in sport.
- 3.11 Pupils develop excellent skills in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). They use tablet computers confidently and effectively to research, record and organise information. Pupils develop good touch-typing skills and use applications assuredly to enhance their work, such as when using spreadsheets and formulae to successfully manage financial accounting in their business unit of inquiry. Pupils make effective use of digital technology across their learning, for example to aid their music composition. They develop strong skills in coding such as creating algorithms for vehicles to move, stop and turn. Pupils have used 3D modelling software to successfully design a sculpture and impose the building onto a photograph of the school to see the effect the sculpture will have on the space. Pupils' ICT skills benefit from the school leaders, with the support of the proprietors, fully embracing digital learning and investing in the technology.

- 3.12 Pupils achieve well outside the classroom. Their most recent commendations include awards in art, chess and football. Achievements in music are strong, with several successes in ABRSM instrumental music examinations and the string group have performed at local events. Pupils received a 'Discovery Award' as part of the *John Muir Award* from the Sustainability Centre following their residential visit. The school encourages pupils to follow their interests, to be risk-takers and to try a wide range of activities. The pupils respond with initiative and some having created their own extra-curricular activities such as the *Climate Care Group*. They exemplify the philosophy of the school's founding principles of 'it is not being enough just to think about something, action is required'.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils' levels of self-understanding for their age are extremely high. They rapidly develop confidence and self-esteem as they progress through the school, helped by wholly positive interactions with adults and each other. Pupils' strong self-esteem is developed through the staff's highly effective use of praise and encouragement and through pastoral support tailored to their individual needs. Pupils show a high degree of self-confidence and resilience from an early age. Whether playing in the shop, role-playing in the hospital, working with healthy foods and 3D art, children do so with confidence and positive self-esteem. They are helped to develop this by staff who understand and know them well. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their children to be confident and independent and inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils are well equipped to make excellent use of self-reflection. Older pupils show a mature understanding of how their efforts with their inquiries contribute to their personal development and provide an academic resourcefulness to benefit them in the next stage of their lives. The school is highly successful in meeting its aim of actively encouraging pupils to be agents for their own and others' learning through the promotion of pupils' belief in their ability to succeed.
- 3.15 Pupils behave with a high degree of respect for one another and show a strong understanding of the importance of maintaining positive relationships with one another. They recognise that this will enable them to achieve better on an individual and on a team basis. They have a strong moral understanding underpinned by a keen sense of right, wrong, equality and justice. Pupils successfully reflect the IB learner profile of a principled approach as they show respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere and take responsibility for actions and their consequences. In their inquiry into the responsibilities involved in the representation of human appearance in the media, older pupils showed a strong moral sense and responsibility for action. Pupils' exemplary behaviour benefits from the excellent role modelling provided by their teachers and support staff. Almost all pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school teaches them how to build positive relationships and friendships. Pupils respect the rule of law and value the school rules which they view as common sense and stand ready to challenge negative behaviour if required.
- 3.16 Pupils throughout the school show a highly developed social awareness for their age. Young children displayed excellent social awareness when ensuring latecomers to their activity were fully included and able to enjoy what the group had been making. Pupils appreciate the needs and strengths of others and are highly effective in helping each other to solve problems and meet a common goal, such as in a music lesson where groups of pupils developed their own story from a song. Pupils working on their exhibition projects have social development and collaboration at the core of their inquiries and show outstanding social awareness on issues such as disinformation through social media, unconscious bias and stereotyping around gender inclusion. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire survey agreed that the school helps their child to develop strong teamwork and social skills, and inspection evidence supports this view. Older pupils help to support younger ones through the buddy system, where they also give strong peer support to new pupils. Pupils seize opportunities to celebrate the successes of others as seen when congratulating the recipients of awards for making

a difference. Pupils' outstanding social collaboration stems from the school's deeply embedded culture of mutual respect and their confidence that everyone is valued.

- 3.17 Pupils make an excellent contribution to the lives of others within their own school community and to wider society. They show a strong appreciation of their place in the world and the need to support others. They have a clear understanding of environmental issues and the 'global goals' embedded in their curriculum. Pupils show a genuine appreciation of the idea that their actions can make a difference. This is epitomised in the annual *Milton Toubkin Award* to a group or individual for 'making a difference'. This flagship award by the school's founder encourages pupils to have a commitment to service, and to act to make a positive difference in the lives of others. It successfully promotes an environment in which the pupils use their initiative to generate funds for a variety of charitable causes. Pupils act with maturity, energy and pride in the positions of responsibility they hold. They willingly accept the responsibilities and the expectations on them that this brings. Pupils elected to the student council worked successfully to generate funds for a local food bank after interviewing the organisation's director, forming a business plan and running a craft fair. Within school they have prompted improved re-cycling and planned a zero-waste snack competition. Pupils are able to effect change because the school leaders encourage and actively listen to the pupils' views. Pupils are proactive in their efforts to help others and show their empathy and compassion. A group of pupils devastated by the events in Ukraine worked independently to organise a sale and donate the funds raised to the *Voices of the Children* charity.
- 3.18 Pupils willingly contribute to a range of decisions that will influence both their academic and personal progress. Pupils are well supported by their teachers, who instil an excellent understanding in pupils that successful decision making is entirely within their gift. Pupils make wise choices about how they can help develop themselves and help others, such as standing for the student council, choosing to support charities, caring for the environment and other initiatives. Pupils understand that there are consequences to their decisions that affect their wellbeing. Older pupils discussing what is within their control and what is not decided that they can control how they react to something, but not how they feel. They show an excellent understanding that the future belongs to them and that they must take action to ensure their wellbeing in issues such as climate change, innovation in science and technology, food security and gender equality.
- 3.19 Pupils show a good understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of areas such as on the sports field, when using roads and online. Pupils understand well the importance of good physical and mental health and of healthy eating. The youngest children learn about good oral hygiene and were seen to demonstrate their understanding using the model in their classroom. They also discussed good eating habits when sorting unhealthy and healthy foods into groups. Most pupils responding to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages them to be healthy. Pupils learn about health and welfare through various units of inquiry including topics on wellbeing and mindfulness. They are helped to interpret and balance their physical, social and mental health with the support of staff.
- 3.20 Pupils show a strong understanding and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Their understanding extends to a holistic acceptance of all life and the impact they can make to support their global environment. They are encouraged to consider a range of positive values and virtues such as heritage and helpfulness that promotes this appreciation. Whilst taking photographs of nature around the campus, pupils showed a strong sense of awe and wonder for creation. Their appreciation of nature is supported by the opportunity to spend time in the schools' edible garden. Pupils show a deep appreciation of their opportunities to explore London and experience music concerts, theatre and art galleries, resulting in Year 6 pupils' effective inquiry into the benefits of art therapy.
- 3.21 Pupils actively champion their different cultures and enjoy discussing and sharing their personal faiths with others in an open and inquiring manner, free from any form of prejudice. Pupils are well aware of how important it is not to discriminate against others as a result of any differences they recognise. They show excellent acceptance of diversity and understand the importance of the school's natural cultural differences. Pupils actively discuss the differences between their faiths to further their

understanding of other beliefs. Over the course of the pupils' unit of inquiry on this, the school arranged for five representatives of major religions and one open-minded visiting speaker to help deepen pupils' understanding of faiths. The school is highly successful in meeting the IB learner profile aim of encouraging pupils to critically appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. Pupils share their own cultural heritage and enjoy other cultures at the school's *International Evening* and value the opportunity for their parents to come into the school and read and share stories from their heritage.

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 chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and assemblies. 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

Mr Vaughan Jelley	Reporting inspector
Mrs Katy Joiner	Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr James Ashcroft	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mrs Claire Robinson	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)