



## BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

### RANDOM SPOT CHECK INSPECTION (College)

**INSTITUTION:** Heatherley School of Fine Art

**ADDRESS:** 75 Lots Road  
London  
SW10 0RN

**HEAD OF INSTITUTION:** Veronica Ricks, Principal

**Type of accreditation:** College

**Accreditation status:** Accredited

**Date of inspection:** 9 February 2016

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** 14 April 2016

## **1. Background to the institution**

In 1845 a school was established that was independent of the Government School of Design and which concentrated on helping students prepare applications for admission to the Royal Academy Schools. One of its students, Thomas Heatherley, became its second Principal in 1860. More than a century later a charitable trust was established, support was received from the ILEA, the then Principal purchased the name Heatherleys and, in 1988, the School gained ownership of its own premises. In 2014 a new Principal was appointed (see below).

The School occupies purpose-built accommodation on four floors just off an attractive part of the King's Road, Chelsea, offering seven studios, staff and student refreshment areas, an administration office, shop, library, lecture theatre, tutorial room and car park. The building is characterized by high ceilings and very generous window space and studios and classrooms are very well equipped for teaching, by experienced artists and sculptors, of portraiture, sculpture, drawing and painting, printmaking (intaglio, relief, litho and screen) and ceramics at a professional level

The School's charitable aims extend beyond its walls to the wider community; for example, it has offered its facilities recently to sixth-formers from a local State academy free of charge for life drawing, print-making and sculpture. It regularly holds exhibitions in-house and elsewhere (see below) to which the public are invited.

## **2. Brief description of current provision**

The School continues to award its own two-year Diploma on the successful completion of (part-time, three days per week) courses with an annual enrolment of about 45. The Diploma courses are rigorously assessed and they are also validated by The Royal Society of Portrait Painters, the Royal British Society of Sculptors and the Society of Portrait Sculptors. Artists often return to continue their studies, sometimes over several years. There is also an extensive programme of short part-time courses, attracting around 400 students a year, with daytime, evening and weekend classes. A core group of expert practitioners leads specialist teams of artist-teachers, and tutors are supported by studio technicians. The Principal also teaches.

The School held its prestigious annual portraiture exhibition in the week of the inspection, and earlier this year held a public exhibition over four days at the Bankside Gallery involving its entire staff.

## **3. Inspection process**

The inspection was conducted over half a day by one inspector with the Principal. During an extensive tour of the premises, the inspector visited four classes in a range of subjects including advanced print-making, ceramics and water-colours and a well-attended open studio. The inspector talked to a number of tutors and students and observed both students' work and the current portrait exhibition.

## **4. Inspection history**

**Full inspection:** 2 and 3 July 2013

**Interim inspection:** 7 August 2014

## **5. Significant changes since the last inspection**

The long-standing Principal described in the background section retired in autumn 2014 and the experienced Director of Sculpture, an active tutor who has been in the School for eighteen years appointed as Principal. She continues to teach on the sculpture Diploma course and water-colour classes as well as heading the administration in a part-time capacity.

## **6. Response to action points in last report**

There were no action points or recommendations after the previous (interim) inspection. It was noted at the interim inspection in 2014 that the School had taken vigorous steps to deal with the action points set out in the 2013 report, the steps appearing to be effective. The improvements, supported by on-going staff training, have been maintained and enhanced, for example, in the range and extent of feedback to students through regular tutorials.

## **7. Conclusion including any action points and/or recommendations**

The high standards evidenced at the interim inspection have been sustained and even enhanced further, within a friendly and co-operative learning community accessible to all ages. The School aims to have a rolling programme of exhibitions to help its students progress even further, and has recently begun a programme of monthly lectures open to the public and involving well-known artists and speakers. The recommendations that were found to have been carried out in 2014 have resulted in what can be described as a well-established learning community that extends beyond the College walls.

There are no action points or recommendations.