

St John's Preparatory and Senior School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

St John's Preparatory and Senior School is a co-educational day school located on two separate sites near Enfield, London. It was opened in 1988 and the headteacher of the senior school and the headteacher of the preparatory school are also the proprietors of the school. The school was previously inspected in March 2009 and received a progress monitoring visit in April 2010.

There are currently 425 pupils on roll aged between 4 and 18 years. All except one of the pupils attend full time. The preparatory school provides places for 159 pupils, as well as 25 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class. Thirteen pupils are in receipt of government nursery funding. The senior school accommodates 240 pupils aged between 11 and 18 years. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs and none requires support for English as an additional language. The school emphasises its Christian ethos, but it is not a faith school. The school's aims are that pupils care for each other, work as hard at their studies as they do at play, and be brave (but always courteous) thinkers.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides an outstanding quality of education and most pupils make outstanding progress from their original starting points. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and so is pupils' behaviour. As at the time of the last inspection, the school has maintained high standards in public examinations, particularly at GCSE and A level. The curriculum is good and outstanding provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Since the last inspection, safeguarding arrangements have improved and they now meet all regulatory requirements. Provision for pupils' welfare health and safety is satisfactory, and the school has improved facilities for those who are ill. The school meets all except one of the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn and make good or better progress; however, outdoor provision in the Early Years

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Foundation Stage requires improvement. The school's statements and policies provide an accurate summary of the curriculum experienced by pupils and are implemented effectively. Written planning and schemes of work are devised by school leaders and draw on National Curriculum and commercial materials, where appropriate, and in line with the school's ethos. Guidance is used effectively to provide a curriculum well suited to the needs of the vast majority of pupils.

The English curriculum provides well planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills through ongoing dialogue, discussions and collaborative work. All of the required areas of learning are taught. The school have taken care to extend the curriculum so that all pupils are able to find something to meet their specific needs. For example, newly-established improvements to the school's music provision extend opportunities for children to further develop their creative and performing skills and their particular musical talents. The school extends the curriculum further through frequent outdoor education trips, residential experiences and visits that help pupils develop a good understanding of public institutions. A range of sporting activities including golf, rock climbing, horse riding and sailing, and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is now established. The school provides strong careers, employment and university entrance guidance, and support and advice that help to prepare pupils for the next stage in their lives.

The impact of the school's personal social and health education programme is evident in the outstanding progress pupils make in developing their social and personal skills. Opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their learning across the curriculum are improving with new ICT rooms and improved access to computers, although some pupils state that they would appreciate further opportunities to use technology to support learning.

The curriculum in the early years is well planned with a good balance of activities children can choose from and those led by an adult. Activities are well matched to children's needs. The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage does not include free access to outdoor areas and learning indoors is not always seamlessly extended outdoors. On occasions outdoor activities are not stimulating. This said, staff take care to make regular use of the grounds to develop children's skills and knowledge of the natural environment.

The quality of teaching and assessment are outstanding and lead to pupils making outstanding progress. In each key stage inspectors observed a high proportion of excellent teaching and learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and play a significant part in developing pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Teachers set high expectations which motivate pupils to produce their best work and ensure that they make rapid progress. Outstanding behaviour and excellent attitudes to learning in the vast majority of lessons are key ingredients for success. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and are very keen to learn. From the earliest age, pupils are actively involved in lessons and their high-quality, thoughtful responses demonstrate increasing awareness and understanding. In an exciting and engaging Year 9 history lesson on the short- and long-term causes of the First World War, the teacher made

good use of opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and this led to a valuable exchange of ideas. Pupils develop into confident and articulate speakers and are regularly expected to provide their views formally in presentations. Secure teacher knowledge ensures that concepts are taught well, and the teaching methods and resources used lead to very effective learning. A national examination board noted the high quality of pupils' responses in GCSE Law and sought permission to use pupils' scripts as exemplars. Specialist teachers convey their enthusiasm for their subject very well and teach concepts very well, including to the very youngest children.

Regular testing and checks on progress provide assessment information and data which are used effectively to monitor pupils' progress. These are used to identify and provide ongoing support for less confident pupils to ensure their inclusion in learning. Teachers know their pupils very well and use national benchmarks and assessment tests for English and mathematics, and other measures, including regular 'mini' and 'maxi' tests, to monitor progress. These systems are used effectively to alert pupils to errors, and procedures enable pupils to know how well they are doing and what they must do to improve and progress. The results of these regular assessments are recorded in mark books and progress reports and the information provides an accurate record of individuals' progress over time. Data are used to inform parents and carers about their children's progress. In the preparatory school, excellent marking for Years 5 and 6 pupils ensures that they are actively involved in assessing and identifying ways to improve. Although this high-quality marking is not replicated across all Key Stage 2 classes. Reception teachers and teaching assistants are skilful at promoting positive attitudes to work, and this means children settling quickly and enjoying their learning. Activities for the youngest children are well planned and are based on detailed assessments about children's knowledge, skills and understanding. Children make consistently good progress from the moment they arrive and outcomes are good across all areas of learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are very proud of the school and appreciate its unique provision. Senior pupils are warmly greeted each morning with an individual handshake or a car door is opened by a member of staff for those arriving at the preparatory school. Such activity helps boost pupils' self-esteem and confidence. In their collaborative work, discussions and around the school, pupils show excellent respect and consideration towards each other.

Pupils have very few concerns about any aspect of school life. They enjoy coming to school, as demonstrated by their high levels of attendance and in the overwhelmingly positive response in talking to inspectors and via pupils' questionnaires. Pupils feel very safe and have a good awareness of all forms of bullying. Pupils commented that they feel confident that they can go to any adult if they have a concern and know that they will respond well to any reported incidents. Pupils' spiritual development is very well supported through thoughtful assemblies

and religious education lessons. Pupils are gaining a good awareness and appreciation of faiths and cultures different from their own, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony. For example, Year 6 pupils researched famous mathematicians from history and the display of their work included male and female mathematicians from a wide range of cultures. Pupils' cultural development is exemplified in the reflective and high-quality art work on display around the school.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community. For example, sixth formers regularly clean and maintain the sixth form house, and other pupils take responsibility for keeping the accommodation clean and tidy. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Their active contribution to learning, coupled with high levels of concentration and perseverance, and rapid acquisition of skills and knowledge are significant factors in their progress.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school pays due regard to current national guidance on safeguarding and all staff, including the designated person for child protection, have undergone child protection training at the appropriate level. Safer recruitment checks on the suitability of staff are in place and are well documented. However, the school's sports changing facilities do not provide suitable premises for pupils to maintain their health and hygiene. Risk assessments for educational visits are adequate, but vary in the level of recorded detail about potential hazards.

Regular termly checks are completed, with a professional consultant, to monitor and improve the procedures for health and fire safety at both sites. Fire fighting equipment is checked regularly and the school has ensured that checks are completed annually on the safety of portable electrical appliances. A member of staff from both sites has attended fire marshal training.

Levels of care are very good and staff show respect and consideration in their day-to-day relationships with pupils. They have attended appropriate training in first aid and child protection. The school monitors and records accidents appropriately and has a clear policy in place to obtain parental permission to administer medicine. The school maintains individual pupil log books which record the school's response to any academic, behaviour and safeguarding issues. The school has a three-year plan that meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has improved recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors to work with children. All of the required checks have been completed effectively. Record keeping is well organised and the school ensures that additional checks are carried out on staff employed from countries outside the United Kingdom. All of the required information is recorded in the single central record.

Premises and accommodation at the school

Both schools are set in spacious and extensive grounds with a range of playing and recreation areas. Since the last inspection the school has completed refurbishment of a small building in the preparatory school grounds to include a well-decorated and spacious washroom area. Both sites now provide suitable facilities for those who are ill. Classrooms and other areas are well lit and are well ventilated and are suitable for the learning needs of all pupils. The school has improved the specialist facilities for science and has begun to provide more extensive computer facilities for senior pupils. Some interior corridors have not been refurbished recently; however, the standard of decoration is adequate. The sports changing area for boys in the senior school is not equipped with showers and this means that premises regulations are not fully met. The school holds completed architect drawings with plans to improve the classroom space and outdoor areas for children in the Reception class.

Provision of information

All regulations are met. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the progress that their children make. All parents and carers who completed the Ofsted questionnaire felt that their children enjoy school, are kept safe, work hard and that the school deals appropriately with unacceptable behaviour. Parents and carers are provided with clear, accurate and detailed up-to-date information about their child's academic grades and progress in the subjects taught.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints policy sets out a series of procedures that meets regulatory requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- provide sufficient shower facilities for senior pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs and disability, which take account of regulations 3 and 4 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(j)).

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Further improve outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	√			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	√			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	√			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of pupils	√			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			√	
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Preparatory and senior day school		
Date school opened	1988		
Age range of pupils	4–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 235	Girls: 189	Total: 424
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,190–£9,660		
Address of school	The Ridgeway Potters Bar Hertfordshire EN6 5QT		
Telephone number	01707 657 294 (Preparatory school) 0208 366 0035 (Senior school)		
Email address	stjohnssc@aol.com		
Headteacher	Andrew and Calliope Tardios		
Proprietor	Andrew and Calliope Tardios		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

6 July 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of St John's Preparatory and Senior School, Enfield EN2 8BE

Thank you for the friendly and courteous way you welcomed inspectors to your school. We have judged that the school provides you with an outstanding education and all government requirements, except one, are met. The older pupils do not have shower facilities and the school must ensure that they do. We enjoyed meeting you and noticed your outstanding behaviour and how much you participated in lessons. You have made outstanding progress in developing your social, moral and cultural understanding. You make excellent academic progress because of your own hard work, the caring and supportive staff and the high quality of teaching that you receive. We were impressed at the high standards you reach and your very high examination results. From your first days in school, until the time you leave, you are given a wide range of opportunities to learn and develop your skills and knowledge. You are helped by caring staff who work hard to ensure that you are looked after and are kept safe.

Teachers provide you with interesting lessons that are very well planned. This helps you to produce outstanding work. We noticed how Year 9 pupils were able to understand and explain the impact of the First World War. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 clearly enjoyed practising their drama performance, I hope it went well. We enjoyed the end of year senior assembly, listening to the presentations and learning about your plans for the summer holidays. We especially appreciated hearing the applause from the audience for staff and pupils' contributions.

Throughout your time at the school you are given excellent support by a range of staff. Adults provide you with help to develop your speaking and listening skills. I hope that the Year 9 pupils enjoyed their visit to Madrid and came back with many memories. We have asked the school to improve the outdoor provision for children in the Reception class so that they can move freely indoors and outside and so further develop their knowledge of the natural environment.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield
Her Majesty's Inspector