

# Salcombe Preparatory School

Independent school standard inspection report

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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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Salcombe Preparatory School is a co-educational independent school situated in Southgate, London. The school was founded in 1918 and occupies two neighbouring sites which house the lower and the upper school. In 2009, the school established a Nursery class and now has pupils aged from three to 11 years. There are currently 185 pupils taught in 16 classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Nursery class and three Reception classes for 47 children, all of whom are government funded. One child has a statement of special educational needs. There is a rich variety of nationalities. The school provides wrap-around care before and after school on both sites with a homework club and activities organised by the school. The school was last inspected in January 2009. The present owners purchased the school in 2005 and the current headteacher took up post in September 2009.

The school aims 'to inspire in all pupils a love of learning by offering the best possible education, meaningful engagement in learning, participation in a wide range of activities and opportunities to develop the attitudes and values which will prepare our young people to lead happy, stimulating, useful and fulfilled lives'.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Salcombe is a good school overall with a number of outstanding features. It provides good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is very successful in fulfilling its aims to provide pupils with a well-rounded and balanced education. The school's warm and welcoming atmosphere is highly appreciated by pupils, parents and carers. The pupils are polite, articulate and courteous and show very positive attitudes to learning. All of the regulations are met, including the school's safeguarding arrangements which are robust. Those regulations not met at the time of the last inspection have now all been addressed.

## **Quality of education**

The school's curriculum is good; it covers a broad and well-balanced range of subjects with detailed schemes of work which are well planned and cater well for the needs of all pupils.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, detailed planning covers all the areas of learning well. There are many opportunities for child-initiated learning activities. Classrooms are bright and vibrant with colourful displays of children's work. Staff ensure that children make best use of the well-organised and resourced play areas inside and the large outdoor play areas, which have soft surfaces and appropriate play and climbing equipment. In Years 1 and 2, the curriculum places a good emphasis on developing effective reading, spelling and number skills. Pupils also benefit well from specialist teaching in French, physical education (PE) and music and there is a wide range of after-school clubs for pupils to attend.

In Years 3 to 6, the English curriculum clearly fulfils its aim to provide a rich learning experience through language and literature lessons, drama, library skills, guided reading and differentiated and extension work. The mathematics curriculum is outstanding and clearly tailored to meet the needs of all pupils. The higher attaining pupils are provided with differentiated and challenging tasks and the less able with equally challenging work with additional support from experienced support teachers. Specialist lessons in science, with opportunities for practical work, French, history, geography, sports coaching, music art and design and technology all add much to pupils' learning, enjoyment and good progress. As with the younger pupils, there is a wide array of after-school clubs for the older pupils. These are well attended and much appreciated by pupils, parents and carers. In addition, pupils have opportunities to hear visiting speakers and to take part in a wide range of visits and outings locally. For Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, an outdoor activity week and a week-long trip to France richly enhance the curriculum and add much to their personal and social development.

The curriculum has improved since the last inspection with pupils from Years 1 to 6 now benefiting from good quality provision in information and communication technology (ICT) and personal, social and health education (PSHE).

Teaching is good overall with the best being outstanding. Assessment procedures are robust. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is consistently good teaching in small classes where children make good progress in reading and number skills. A good balance is struck between teacher-led and child-initiated learning activities. In Years 1 and 2, the good teaching is characterised by good questioning, the consistent sharing of learning objectives and the effective deployment of support staff to support the less-able pupils. Occasionally, teachers do not make best use of available assessment data to ensure that work is always challenging enough for the more-able pupils in particular. In Years 3 to 6, teachers establish clear goals through careful planning for lessons. Pupils settle quickly in class and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. The small classes ensure that teachers know each pupil well and offer a good level of individual support. Individual assessments of progress are used well to set differentiated learning tasks and are a significant factor in pupils' good and at times outstanding progress. Teachers mark pupils' work well and give detailed and helpful comments on how they can improve their work. Pupils are then more than willing to take on board these comments. As for the younger pupils, there

is good support throughout for pupils with learning difficulties. In the best teaching seen in Years 3 to 6, the teachers set high expectations and challenging tasks, the pace of lessons moves at a fast rate and incisive questioning keeps pupils on their toes from the start of lessons to the end. In response, pupils rise to the challenges set, stay focused and make regular and telling contributions to the lesson. There are occasions when opportunities are missed for pupils to develop collaborative skills by working in pairs or small groups or to develop their reporting skills to the class.

The school's procedures to assess pupils' achievements are robust and demonstrate the overall good, and at times outstanding, progress that pupils of all abilities make. All pupils are assessed on entry to the school and pupils' progress over each academic year is carefully monitored. School leaders analyse well test and assessment data and use the information effectively to identify variations in progress and to agree specific actions to address any perceived slowing of progress. As a result, pupils receive focused support which helps them to make a marked improvement in their knowledge and understanding and to increase their rate of progress. The school is in the process of transferring data to a computerised assessment system to refine further assessment procedures. The volume of work in pupils' books is impressive and demonstrates the good progress of pupils over time. Well-planned and challenging extension work in mathematics and English, and in verbal and non-verbal reasoning, leads to many pupils working well above the level expected for their age and, as a result, they are very successful in gaining scholarships in local selective school examinations for secondary school. All pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their academic education.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through weekly assemblies, where the 'Virtues Project' is used as a basis for reflection on topics such as love, kindness and loyalty. This is further developed through follow-up discussions on the theme of the week and through the PSHE and religious education programme where pupils learn about other faiths and cultures. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children were learning right from wrong from the tale of The Hare and the Tortoise through role play. Behaviour in and around the school is good. While there were a small number of comments in pupils' questionnaires with regard to inappropriate behaviour, the inspectors did not see any evidence of this; pupils worked and played well together. Pupils are particularly welcoming of new pupils as they reported in discussion with the inspectors. They talked highly of the way they are supported in school by all teachers. Pupils are polite and courteous and demonstrate good levels of tolerance and acceptance of others. They show good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They thoroughly enjoy all that the school has to offer and this is reflected in outstanding attendance rates.

Pupils' social development is outstanding. The school council provides pupils with a voice in school affairs and older pupils take on responsibilities as prefects, house captains and monitors. They also show prospective parents around the school. In the

lower school, children have opportunities to be class monitors and to use the well-planned play areas for developing socially as they play together. The school makes good use of the broad cultural diversity of pupils to ensure that they gain a strong appreciation of contemporary Britain and are respectful of other cultures and faiths. Pupils regularly participate in team games, activities and drama productions in each area of the school, and as a whole school, and in musical concerts. The school has good links with a range of local and national organisations which develop pupils' understanding of the wider world and their place in society.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. The accommodation for dining and the grounds are small and, as a result, lunchtimes are staggered to enable pupils to eat and play safely, but this works well and there were no complaints from pupils with regard to the arrangements when discussed with the inspectors. Lunch is healthy with a good choice of hot dishes, a salad bar, dessert or fruit. Pupils are well supervised when they arrive in the morning and at the end of the day when waiting for parents and carers. Security arrangements are good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that there is someone they can turn to if they have any worries. Through the 'speaking out' programme, pupils are encouraged to talk about any of their concerns and to support each other. Pupils report that there is very little bullying and is taken seriously if it does occur. Parents reported in the questionnaires that they are highly appreciative of the support staff provide for their children.

Appropriate policies are in place including those for educational visits, first aid, fire risk and accidents. Since the last inspection, these are reviewed on a regular basis and are fully embedded in practice. General health and safety risk assessments are fully in place and fire drills and alarm checks are regularly carried out. Appropriate numbers of staff on both sites are trained in first aid and all staff have received up-to-date training in child protection. There is a designated Child Protection officer on both sites. The school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school has completed thorough and appropriate checks on all new employees prior to their appointment. It has a central record in place which gives details of all the statutory vetting and safeguarding checks that have been carried out. It ensures that all supply staff and ancillary staff employed through agencies have the appropriate clearance and checks, and records this formally in the central record.

## **Premises and accommodation at the school**

Both the upper and lower school buildings are welcoming with colourful displays of pupils' work, which are particularly vibrant and attractive in the lower school. Outside space is limited at the upper site but staggered playtimes ensure pupils have sufficient space to play while others have their guided reading time. This works very

well. There are sufficient washroom facilities within both sites and the school continues to maintain and decorate buildings as required. The buildings are clean and well looked after. Classrooms are small but comfortable and adequate for the small numbers in each class. Both the lower and upper school sites provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, which meet requirements and address the absence of a medical room for ill children on the upper site raised in the last inspection report.

## **Provision of information**

The school's well-presented and informative website and the school prospectus provide parents and prospective parents and carers with all required information about the school together with a comprehensive list of all school policies. Written reports are sent to parents and carers twice a year. Assessment reports with targets are sent three times a year and include clear evaluations of pupils' progress. There are weekly news bulletins and regular updates on the school website. In addition there are two parents-and-teachers conferences a year and additional transition meetings for parents of children in Early Years, Year 2, Year 3 and for those whose children are transferring to secondary schools.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The complaints policy meets all 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').<sup>3</sup>

## **What the school could do to improve further**

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

- In the upper school, further develop teaching to include pupils' pair and group work across all subjects and to develop pupils' skills in reporting back to the class.
- In the lower school, ensure that data are reviewed more regularly to inform teaching and learning to challenge the more able in particular.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made).

## 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

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Preparatory		
<b>Date school opened</b>	1918		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 120	Girls: 65	Total: 185
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 10	Girls: 8	Total: 18
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£8,700		
<b>Address of school</b>	224–226 Chase Side, Southgate London N14 4PL		
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 441 5282; 0208 441 5356		
<b>Email address</b>	info@salcombeprep.co.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christina Leach		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cognita Ltd		

**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.**

2 February 2012

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Salcombe School, Southgate, London N14 4PL**

It was a privilege to be able to come and spend time in your school last week. I enjoyed the experience because your school provides you with a good quality of education and is a very warm and welcoming place to visit. I would like to say thank you to you all because you contribute greatly to this and help make your school the happy place it is. I would like to congratulate you on your hard work and good progress. All of you whom I saw in class were working hard, learning new skills, learning to be accepting of each other and helping to create a positive community where everyone can work together.

Your behaviour in lessons and in the playground is good and you are very kind at including each other and welcoming new pupils. This is good to see. I know that a small number of you were a little concerned about behaviour and I have made the teachers and headteacher aware of this. If you have any concerns whatsoever I am sure that all staff will be only too ready to take your concerns on board.

As I have said, your school provides you with a good quality of education and the good teaching you receive enables you all to make good progress. But even schools like yours can improve so I have asked the headteacher and staff to improve a couple of areas. I have asked teachers and staff in the upper school to provide you with more opportunities to work together and to share the outcomes of discussions and your work with the whole class. In the lower school, I have asked teachers to make work a little more challenging for you, particularly those pupils who find the work easy.

Now that I have visited your school I am sure you will want to continue to make good progress in the future. So this is your challenge: to keep up the good work, the high standards that your teachers set for you and to make the most of every opportunity that comes your way.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Flora Bean  
Lead inspector