

# The Fulham Preparatory School Limited

200 Greyhound Road, London W14 9SD

## Inspection dates

19–21 September 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The principal, supported by senior leaders, the proprietor and governors, have continually introduced strategies to improve the school. They have ensured that good teaching enables pupils to achieve well.
- Teachers know their pupils well and have secure subject knowledge. As a result, pupils make good progress. However, teaching does not always challenge the most able pupils to achieve as well as they should.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are extremely polite and friendly and they have excellent manners.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, work well together and are motivated to succeed.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a wide variety of situations. They know whom to contact if they are worried.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Safeguarding is effective. All staff receive regular training and updates to ensure that they are aware of the latest guidance.
- Staff benefit greatly in their work from the valuable staff training programme.
- Governance is effective. Governors are increasingly confident in challenging and holding leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Leadership, provision and teaching in the early years are good. Effective teamwork by staff and interesting activities ensure that children make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Leaders, governors and staff do not always have full information on the progress of different groups of pupils on which to base their decisions.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Further improve leadership and management and the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - the school's assessment system is fully established and contains a broad enough range of information to enable leaders, staff and governors to check accurately the progress of all pupils
  - teachers challenge the thinking of the most able pupils more sharply, so that they make more substantial progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The board of directors, governors, senior leaders and principal have built a culture of high expectations and success for every pupil. Leaders inspire a committed team of staff and they have secured provision of good quality. Together, they have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. The principal is fully aware of what the school still needs to do to secure outstanding provision.
- The school's values of 'commitment, courtesy and consideration' are at the heart of its work. Since his arrival in September 2016, the new principal has improved a range of systems, including the approach to checking on the quality of teaching. He and the senior management team are committed to improving teaching and pupils' progress, while at the same time ensuring pupils' safety and welfare.
- Overall, staff at all levels are very positive about the many training opportunities available to them. Staff work together in teams and they are all involved in observing each other teaching and in sharing good ideas.
- Staff commented positively on how effective this strategy has been in boosting their confidence in experimenting and in preparing interesting activities. Working parties and weekly training sessions enable them to share good practice. For example, all staff are required to report their findings from attending external courses. This ensures that all colleagues benefit from the training attended.
- Over time, leaders have been particularly successful in developing their own staff so that they gain promotion, both in the school and beyond. For example, since the last inspection, three teaching assistants have become fully qualified teachers. Induction arrangements for newly qualified teachers are very effective. This is because leaders not only focus on improving the teaching skills of the staff but also on their physical and mental well-being.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils are respectful and tolerant and have a mature attitude to people who have different beliefs or lifestyles from their own. The celebrations of festivals from various religions around the world provide many opportunities for pupils to think about and discuss their feelings and behaviour.
- The well-balanced curriculum is innovative and carefully matched to pupils' needs, and it is enriched further with an extensive extra-curricular programme. In line with the school's and the company's aims, this prepares pupils well to enter the modern world and for life in present-day British society. The programme for careers education and guidance ensures that pupils are well informed and prepared for the next stage of their education. The rich arts and sports programmes are very effective at helping pupils achieve excellent performances at both individual and team levels.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection are unanimously positive about the school's work in educating their children. Of those parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, virtually all would recommend the school to another parent.
- The Inspired Education Group provides high-quality support to the school using specialist

advisers and consultants.

- The school's assessment system provides detailed information about how well individual pupils are achieving. However, it provides less detail and analysis about the progress being made by different groups of pupils in individual subjects or by year groups. Leaders and governors have rightly judged that they have less information summarising pupils' achievement by different groups than they would wish to inform their discussions and decisions.
- Inspectors were asked to consider the school's proposal to increase the age range and the number of pupils on roll. The required schemes of work and suitable resources have been prepared to reflect these proposed changes. The school is likely to meet the standards if the changes are implemented.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and offer increasingly confident and effective support and challenge to leaders. They use a range of methods to check on the work of the school. These include receiving weekly written reports from the principal, bimonthly conferences and on-site visits. These activities enable them to have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- The governors and the principal, working in partnership, have taken effective steps to strengthen the school's arrangements for the appraisal of staff. For example, governors have approved the upgrade of the school's assessment system to enable judgements about the performance of staff to be more closely linked to the achievement of their pupils.
- Governors have ensured that a suitable and effective safeguarding policy, along with numerous other policies and information, is available on the school's website.
- Governors have a good overall understanding of the standards pupils achieve and their success in gaining entrance to prestigious independent schools. Nevertheless, they acknowledge that they have not always been as active as they might in seeking information about the progress of different groups of pupils, particularly the most able. This information would enable governors to provide even greater challenge to leaders, so that when action is needed it can be taken more swiftly.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy reflects the Secretary of State's most recent guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016), and is published on the school's website. It is comprehensive and contains relevant references to, and contact details for, the local authority's safeguarding officers.

- Staff receive suitable and up-to-date safeguarding training so that there is a strong

culture of safeguarding practice throughout the school. Staff are well informed of all types of risk to pupils, including radicalisation and extremism. They are confident of the action to take should they have any concerns about the safety or care of pupils. Staff have a clear understanding of the need to protect pupils from all potential risks.

- Parents who spoke with an inspector and those who responded to Parent View feel that their children are kept extremely safe in school. Parents feel confident that they could always raise issues about any aspect of the school's work with leaders.
- Systems to check the suitability of staff to work with pupils meet requirements. Leaders and governors have completed safer recruitment training. This helps to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The appointment of specialist teachers has ensured that staff have very secure subject knowledge. This is used effectively to develop pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, and their understanding in mathematics and other subjects. Pupils become confident learners because of their strong communication skills.
- Because staff know their pupils well, they are able to plan a range of activities that capture pupils' enthusiasm. Teachers provide interesting tasks that enable pupils to explore mathematical ideas and apply them to different situations. They are encouraged to think for themselves when solving mathematical problems.
- For those pupils who require additional support in their learning, provision is effective. Tasks and resources are matched to pupils' needs, enabling them to make good progress and overcome any barriers to their learning. Teachers' effective deployment of teaching assistants enables the least able readers to make effective use of their phonics skills and to persevere in sounding out unfamiliar words. Pupils' reading abilities have improved because of the effective teaching of phonics.
- Pupils receive helpful guidance, tailored to the requirements of each subject and to their individual needs. This is in line with the school's curriculum policy.
- In a successful music lesson, pupils responded very enthusiastically to the teacher's demonstration of an African song. For example, they were able to perform confidently on tuned and untuned percussion instruments, involving several quite complex rhythmic patterns at the same time. This enabled them to hone their listening so that they could perform the music in time with each other.
- Overall, pupils make good progress. However, teachers do not always provide the most able pupils with challenging enough activities to stimulate their thinking skills and to enable them to make the most rapid progress possible. Leaders have recently introduced new strategies to improve this aspect of the teaching.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils work diligently and enthusiastically at their activities. As they move through the

school they become confident, mature and well-motivated individuals. They have excellent attitudes to their work.

- Once a week, pupils learn about the most effective ways to study. During the inspection, they spoke enthusiastically about how they 'learn, research and present' different topics. This work helps to ensure that pupils' independent skills are highly developed.
- Through interesting assemblies and their personal development lessons, pupils learn about the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle. For example, a variety of healthy options are available from the dining room and lunch boxes are carefully checked by staff. Pupils also grow their own herbs. These opportunities make a strong contribution to pupils' physical and emotional well-being.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel very safe and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Outside speakers have provided sessions on how to stay safe in London and on child sexual exploitation. Last week, older pupils discussed the issues of extremism and radicalisation, following an attack at a nearby tube station. These activities help pupils to become more streetwise, self-confident and determined to succeed.
- Pupils attending off-site training are checked regularly for their progress and attendance. Safety procedures relating to pupils' travel arrangements to the different sporting venues are rigorous.
- Pupils know there is always someone they can turn to if they are upset. 'Worry boxes' on each floor allow pupils to raise any concerns. These boxes are checked daily and concerns are acted on swiftly.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of different types of bullying. Those who spoke with inspectors said that bullying is rare and, if it does occur, it is dealt with quickly by teachers.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- In classrooms and around the school, pupils are polite, friendly and well mannered, showing respect for each other and their teachers. They work well together.
- The very helpful rewards system motivates pupils to adopt the highest standards of behaviour. The high expectations of staff and their effective management of classroom activities ensure that poor behaviour is extremely rare.
- Pupils attend school regularly. When asked why they enjoy school, several pupils said that they love being there because it feels like home.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils in all year groups make good progress in acquiring knowledge and skills, and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. In 2017, pupils aged 11 and 13 successfully passed entrance examinations and all gained places in competitive fields at independent or selective maintained secondary schools.
- At whichever point they join the school, pupils' skills and aptitudes are carefully checked. The results of these checks are used to establish a clear picture of pupils' current

attainment and future potential. Teachers are then able to use the information to plan interesting activities to meet pupils' needs.

- Stimulating classrooms, rich in language, help pupils to develop a love of reading. In the well-stocked library, pupils are often seen choosing books, talking about what they are reading and settling down to read. Teachers skilfully incorporate appropriate phonics teaching to ensure that all pupils make strong progress in their reading skills at key stages 1, 2 and 3. Overall, all pupils attain a reading age that is at least one year above their chronological age.
- Most pupils achieve standards that are above expectations for their ages in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils' work across a wide range of subjects is typically of a high standard.
- The school's information shows that pupils' skills in mathematics are also strong and develop well during their time there. Interesting problem-solving activities deepen pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts, and engage their interest because they are often related to real-life situations.
- Pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress. This is because staff know them well and can plan interesting activities that meet their needs.
- Pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong gains in their literacy skills. This enables them to make good progress across the curriculum. The staff meet pupils' differing educational and care needs well.
- Pupils achieve well in a range of other subjects, particularly in music and sport. From Year 3 onwards, pupils achieve great success in external examinations in public speaking and in performing on a range of musical instruments. Those who attend off-site training in a range of sporting activities make strong progress, often adding to their experience and skills by taking part in competitive fixtures. Large numbers of pupils develop their confidence by participating in local music festivals. These experiences help pupils to develop high levels of self-confidence and self-control, particularly when performing in public.
- Pupils in the small scholarship group make rapid progress and achieve prestigious awards to continue their studies at well-known independent schools. Nevertheless, although the rest of the most able pupils in the school make good progress, they are not always set sufficiently challenging tasks to enable them to reach their full potential. Leaders have recently taken action to address this issue, although it is too soon to judge the effects of the new approaches.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children start the early years with a range of skills that are broadly typical for their age. Because of effective teaching and interesting activities, children make good progress in all areas of learning and are well prepared to start Year 1. In 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was just above the national expectation.
- Children enjoy working together and display high levels of maturity towards staff and

each other. They are motivated to learn and behave extremely well.

- Children are encouraged to explore new ideas in practical ways to enhance their understanding. They explored, for example, different habitats in Africa to consider how animals adapted to their environment. They also discussed the effects of different weather conditions on growing food. Children thoroughly enjoyed this activity and learned much about the effects of nature on the environment.
- Parents are very involved in their children's education and welfare, which has had a positive effect on children's learning. Effective induction arrangements ensure that staff have a good knowledge of children's abilities and skills before they join the early years. The staff use the information to help children to settle into the school quickly.
- Safeguarding practices meet all the relevant independent school standards and the statutory requirements of the early years have been met.
- Leadership of the early years provision is effective. The experienced head of the pre-preparatory department understands the children's learning well. She, together with the head of the early years, checks individual children's progress carefully. Nevertheless, the two leaders acknowledge that staff need to analyse the performance of different groups of children more thoroughly so that the most able children achieve their potential.

## School details

Unique reference number	131165
DfE registration number	205/6390
Inspection number	10035790

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	712
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Inspired Education Group
Chair	Stephen Spurr
Principal	Neil Brooks
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,959–£19,905
Telephone number	020 7386 2444
Website	<a href="http://www.fulhamprep.co.uk">www.fulhamprep.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:prepadmin@fulhamprep.co.uk">prepadmin@fulhamprep.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–5 June 2014

## Information about this school

- The Fulham Prep School Limited is an independent pre-preparatory and preparatory school for boys and girls aged 4–13. The school is located on two sites about a mile apart in the residential area of Fulham, in south-west London. The Reception and key stage 1 classes are located at 47a Fulham High Street, Fulham, London SW6 3JH. Pupils in Years 3 to 9 are taught at 200 Greyhound Road, London W14 9SD.
- There are currently 256 children in the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2, 447 pupils in Years 3 to 8 and nine pupils in Year 9.
- Just over half of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the remainder being White

British. There are pupils of 29 nationalities in the school. They speak a variety of home languages and some are bilingual. Few pupils enter speaking English as an additional language, with none being at an early stage of learning English.

- The school is registered for up to 702 pupils aged four to 13 and currently there are 712 pupils on the roll. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school was last inspected in June 2014, when it was judged to be outstanding.
- Off-site training is made available for pupils to extend their learning experiences. The school offers the following activities:
  - Tennis at Putney Lawn Tennis Club, Balmuir Gardens, London SW15 6NG.
  - Squash at Queens' Club, 43 Fairholme Road, London SW14 9JZ.
  - Swimming at Fulham Pools, Virgin Active, Normand Park, 197 Lillie Road, London SW6 7ST.
  - Community service activities at St Andrew's Church, Greyhound Road, London W14 9SA.
- In November 2014, a new proprietorial board, Inspired Education Group, was established.
- The principal took up his post in September 2016.
- The school aims to 'encourage children to give of their best in all they undertake. A range of academic and extra-curricular opportunities enables pupils to develop their full potential. The school strives to put children on a path to a productive adulthood with a sense of responsibility to wider society.'
- When they leave, most pupils transfer to local independent or selective maintained secondary schools.

## Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The material change inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because the school wishes to extend the age range of pupils from 4–13 to 4–14 and to increase the number of pupils on roll from 702 to 720.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across both sites, some jointly with senior staff. They spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection.
- There were 58 responses to Parent View and 87 text comments. One inspector spoke with parents before school started and considered the school's analysis of its own survey of the views of pupils and parents. Inspectors also considered the 75 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors held discussions with the principal, senior and middle leaders, staff and three governors, including the chair.
- Inspectors reviewed key documents and policies, including those related to safeguarding, to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards. They scrutinised pupils' books and the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress.

## Inspection team

David Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Rosemarie McCarthy	Ofsted Inspector
Calvin Henry	Ofsted Inspector

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