

St Faith's School At Ash

CONTENTS

[Introduction and summary](#)

[Purpose and scope of the inspection](#)

[Information about the school](#)

[Summary of main findings](#)

[What the school does well](#)

[What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations](#)

[What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act \(DDA\) 2002](#)

[Compliance with the regulations for registration](#)

[1. The quality of education provided by the school](#)

[The quality of the curriculum](#)

[The quality of the teaching and assessment](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the DDA?](#)

[4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

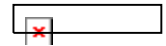
What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

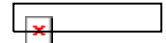
Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

School details

Introduction and summary

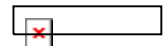


Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

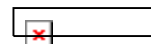
Information about the school



St. Faith's School at Ash is an independent co-educational school for boys and girls aged 3 to 11 years. Admission is non-selective. At the time of the inspection there were 224 pupils on roll. The school opened in January 1987 on the site of a former independent school. The present owners purchased the school in 1997.

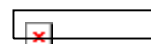
The headteacher, who is one of the owners, believes that pupils at the school *should be given as many opportunities as possible, not just in class but also out of class, to achieve something important*. The school aims that when pupils leave they are *confident, kind, considerate, have developed an internal moral code and are ready for the next stage of their education*.

Summary of main findings



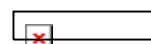
St Faith's School has a strong sense of community. Pupils are well cared for, valued as individuals and encouraged to achieve high standards. English and mathematics form the core of the curriculum and provide pupils with a good basis for future learning. All subjects of the curriculum receive appropriate attention except information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology (DT). The quality of teaching is generally good which enables pupils to make good progress. Relationships are very good and the headteacher and staff are committed to the continuous development of the school.

What the school does well



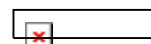
- it has a broad curriculum which is enriched by a wide range of visits and extra-curricular opportunities. Staff work hard to provide a range of worthwhile activities which result in interesting experiences for pupils;
- the foundation stage provision is a strength of the school;
- pupils achieve well in English and mathematics;
- the provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good and the school encourages pupils to grow into thoughtful, happy and responsible young people;
- pupils' behaviour is very good; and
- pupils are confident and articulate speakers who listen attentively and with respect to others.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations



- ensure that pupils of compulsory school age have regular experience of ICT and DT;
- improve the resources in ICT, DT and music;
- ensure that the nominated adult for child protection receives appropriate training every two years and that staff receive training every three years;
- maintain the attendance registers in accordance with the regulations;
- ensure the fabric of the exterior of the school is adequately maintained especially the wooden window frames; and
- provide parents and prospective parents with further information as detailed in section 6 of this report.

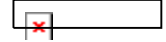
What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002



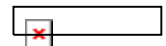
In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

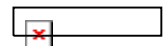
Compliance with the regulations for registration



1. The quality of education provided by the school



The quality of the curriculum



The school provides a broad curriculum. It is well planned for all subjects except ICT and DT in Key Stages 1 and 2. Consequently, these subjects are less well developed than others.

In the nursery and reception classes, good account is taken of the national guidance for the Foundation Stage to plan an interesting and exciting programme of activities appropriate for the age and stage of development of the pupils. Personal, social and emotional development, communication, language, and literacy and mathematical development are planned effectively to form the core of the curriculum. The activities offered encourage pupils to explore, investigate, be imaginative, be creative and to have fun. The inspirational learning environment complements the programme of activities and so helps pupils become independent and enthusiastic learners. The curriculum is constructed to ensure a seamless transition to the Key Stage 1.

At Key Stages 1 and 2 the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education (RE) are taught. The curriculum is extended effectively by the introduction of French from Year 1. However, insufficient regular attention is given to ICT and DT. As a result, skills are not introduced systematically so that pupils can build on previous learning.

The school is successful in developing pupils' speaking, listening, and writing skills. Pupils are articulate and write confidently for a variety of audiences. Reading skills are promoted effectively across the curriculum. Opportunities to develop literacy skills are exploited well across other subjects, for example, writing up science investigations or historical accounts. Numeracy skills are developed successfully and pupils use mathematical charts and diagrams to present data in subjects such as science and geography. The school gives prominence to games and sports and organises matches against local schools.

There are schemes of work for all subjects; too few include an overall statement of aims and guidance for teachers. For example, DT is combined with art and the subject's specific design elements do not feature strongly enough. However, the curriculum documents are currently being reviewed and written to a common format. The newly written schemes provide a more appropriate framework for teachers' planning and identify planned continuity for pupils' learning and progress. ICT, music and RE are less structured than others and have been identified by the school as priorities. In ICT, the absence of subject monitoring across key stages results in the quality of the provision being too dependent on staff expertise and interest.

The school has a policy for personal, social and health education (PSHE) which reflects its aims and ethos. PSHE is taught in circle time, assemblies and science. It provides a good range of topics which help pupils develop self-confidence and self-esteem. The citizenship programme, based on

national guidelines, is not yet fully embedded in the curriculum across all years.

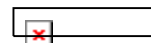
Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school complies fully with the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. Pupils are carefully assessed and their needs are accurately diagnosed. The individual education plans are of good quality and activities are well matched to the targets set. Records are well maintained and pupils' progress is monitored carefully.

Opportunities to learn and take part in a variety of activities outside the classroom are good. The lively programme focuses on a range of sporting, artistic and cultural activities. Special curriculum events, such as a science week, extend its overall impact. The school places great emphasis on visiting places of interest to support the topics being studied. Pupils have visited the World War Two tunnels at Dover Castle, the Globe Theatre and a butterfly centre. Visitors to the school share their knowledge and expertise on a range of subjects with pupils of all ages. Reception pupils were excited to have heard a talk about space travel. Discussion about this talk featured strongly as they made their own model spacecraft. The Year 6 residential visit gives pupils valuable experience of independence and the opportunity to share time with classmates. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel there is a good range of activities, including trips and visits.

A variety of clubs is organised before and after school. These include fencing, dance and ballet. The visiting specialists teach the pupils effectively, enabling them to achieve high standards. In fencing, pupils are developing the precision of movement and the techniques required for competitive bouts.

The school has a well-organised system of homework which consolidates and extends the pupils' learning in class.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is good overall. Almost all the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the teaching benefited their children.

Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage. Staff have a clear understanding of the needs of the under-fives and appreciate the importance of providing an appropriate range of activities. A strength of the provision is the very good team spirit that exists as staff plan, review and evaluate the achievements and progress of pupils. Very good relationships are developed between the pupils and staff who know and understand individuals well. Thoughtful and relevant questioning techniques are used to extend thinking and probe understanding.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is good in the majority of subjects and classes. It is satisfactory in a few and was unsatisfactory in only one of the lessons observed. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they show great enthusiasm and interest in their work. In the most effective lessons, teachers' lesson plans have clear objectives. Appropriate teaching methods are selected which match the learning needs of pupils of different abilities. Teachers have high expectations and provide good support for individual pupils, especially those experiencing difficulties in learning. They employ engaging starter activities for lessons and skilful questioning. Teachers use suitable different groupings such as pair and group work, as well as teaching the whole class together. In less effective lessons, the pace is slower. Occasionally, in some subjects, teachers talk for too long without providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to write or talk about what they are learning. In these lessons there is insufficient challenge for the more able pupils.

The favourable adult-to-pupil ratio in the classes enables teachers to give all pupils individual attention. Teaching assistants work closely with colleagues and are fully involved in classroom activities. The very good relationships between adults and pupils and amongst pupils provide a calm and purposeful environment in which pupils are comfortable in asking questions and discussing

ideas. Teachers in all classes are effective in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Consequently, pupils are confident speakers who acquire a broad vocabulary and have a good command of language.

All pupils make good progress. They achieve particularly well in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress in other subjects is variable. Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in subjects such as history, geography and swimming, but make more limited progress in ICT, DT, and music. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. They are enthusiastic and eager to learn.

There is an effective framework to guide teachers' planning but lesson objectives are not always clear or shared with pupils. On occasions, this makes it difficult for teachers to measure the impact of their teaching. Teachers make good use of available resources. For example, in a French lesson some older text books were used well to enable pupils to learn the French names of animals when preparing verses of a song. The dispersal of computers around the school, with none grouped together in a specialist room prevents pupils from developing their ICT skills sufficiently rapidly and systematically. As a result they do not have the skills to use this technology to further their understanding in other subjects. Although the resources to support learning are satisfactory, those for ICT and music are inadequate.

The assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage are good. Observation is an important element in the assessment process. Significant achievements are noted and detailed information is collated about pupils' progress over time. In Key Stages 1 and 2, regular testing occurs in English and mathematics. In addition to the national tests taken at the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils are assessed using optional national tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. However, the school does not have a common system to record assessment information in other subjects and it is difficult to track pupils' progress across subjects. In Key Stages 1 and 2 marking is of variable quality. It is most detailed and effective in English, mathematics and science but in a number of other subjects the comments on the quality of work lack precision and there is too little guidance for pupils on what they need to do to improve. There is no whole school policy for marking and assessment. However, teachers regularly discuss pupils' work with them during lessons and offer ideas for improvement.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

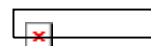
No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that pupils of compulsory school age have regular experience in technology (paragraph 1(2)(a)); and
- improve the resources for ICT and music and ensure that they are used effectively (paragraph 1(3)(f)).

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good. It is an area of significant strength. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school has created a family ethos where pupils, staff and parents have a strong sense of community. Such an ethos makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development through providing a shared set of values, beliefs and aims.

Opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual awareness are not fully exploited in the curriculum. For

example, whilst assemblies actively promote pupils' moral development and support the 'family' ethos of the school, there are missed opportunities at these daily gatherings to promote their spiritual development. Too little use is made of times for quiet reflection and for pupils to think of others instead of themselves. The RE programme helps pupils gain an understanding of different religious practices and traditions. However, on occasions, too much time is spent imparting information with too little devoted to enabling pupils to reflect on what they might learn from their study of the religions. Nevertheless, the school is successfully developing pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' confidence shows in their willingness to perform in front of an audience from a young age. Every opportunity is taken by staff to praise pupils for their efforts and pupils respond with delight.

A clear moral clear framework enables pupils to develop values of fairness and honesty and show respect for just treatment. This, together with the very positive ethos of the school, emphasises well the difference between right and wrong. Pupils understand the importance of adherence to a moral code. The school maintains a calm and orderly community in which pupils develop an awareness of the effect of their actions on others. Staff choose stories in lessons and assemblies to illustrate particular moral issues. Pupils readily conform to a high standard of behaviour and have opportunities to develop their own self-discipline. Behaviour is very good. This has a positive effect on the quality of life in the school. Pupils are given opportunities to exercise responsibilities appropriate for their age. For example, older pupils look after younger ones during break times.

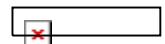
Relationships in the school are very good. They are firmly based on mutual respect and this helps to create an environment in which pupils develop respect for themselves and a sense of care and compassion for others. As a result, the school is a happy, secure community where pupils are keen to learn. The pupils commented on how happy they feel in school; they believe that their teachers value them as individuals and appreciate their contributions in class. Pupils play very well together at break times. From the age of three years they develop successfully the important skills of negotiation and collaboration when working in the classroom. The school offers opportunities for pupils to develop a concern for the others and an awareness of the meaning of citizenship.

Pupils are exposed to a rich variety of experiences through visits as well as through the curriculum. Visits to galleries, museums and other places of interest bring culture alive and stimulate their interest in different traditions and events. Pupils participate in the richness of world cultures through art, music, history and geography. For example, pupils in a Year 3 class are communicating with a school in Japan. They are very excited about this contact and proud to be able to write the date in Japanese.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school provides a safe and healthy environment for its pupils and their welfare is given a high priority. The headteacher and staff take seriously their responsibilities in relation to pupils' welfare, health and safety. Genuine and demonstrable care is shown to pupils.

There is a series of carefully written policy documents for almost all required areas such as anti-bullying, health and safety, fire safety and educational visits. There are sufficient staff qualified in First Aid. The First Aid boxes are all appropriately stocked and are taken on school outings. Accidents are carefully recorded. The correct procedures are in place for contacting parents if their child falls ill. Medicines are properly stored and there is a clear policy for the administration of medication.

Although the school has a child protection policy, neither the nominated person nor members of staff have received the appropriate training. The admission register is kept up to date but attendance registers are not marked in accordance with the regulations.

There are duty rosters for the supervision of pupils at break and lunchtimes and appropriate supervision when pupils use the sports field and swimming pool. An appropriate system of sanctions to deal with incidents of inappropriate behaviour is in place should they be required. A range of healthy meals is prepared and served on the premises. Pupils are given drinks, fruit and biscuits during the day and there is a drinking fountain in the playground.

Although there is a disability policy, there is no forward planning to increase access to meet the needs of pupils with disabilities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

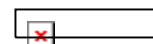
- ensure that the nominated adult for child protection receives appropriate training every two years and that staff receive training every three years (paragraph 3(2)(b)); and
- ensure that attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the regulations (paragraph 3(9)).

What does the school need to do to comply with the DDA?

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

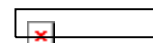


The procedures to verify the experience and qualifications of new teachers and support staff are comprehensive. The required checks have been carried out on the records of staff with the Criminals Records Bureau.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school is built on a five-acre site overlooking farmland. The premises are suitable for a school.

assemblies, physical education, dance and drama. The smaller hall, which has a kitchen attached, is used for lower school assemblies, dining and performances. A former sports pavilion has been converted into two classrooms. French is taught in one. The other provides a suitable environment for teaching individual pupils who are experiencing difficulties in learning. Foundation Stage pupils have appropriate play areas near their classrooms. All classrooms are clean and tidy and are made bright and cheerful by attractive displays of pupils' work. There are sufficient washrooms for pupils and staff. Attractive potted plants add colour outside some classrooms. A reception class has produced a particularly vibrant display to brighten a concrete pathway.

The furniture and equipment are suited to the age and needs of the pupils. The flooring is adequate in most areas of the school. However, in some places the flooring is beginning to look slightly worn. The interior decoration is in good order. The exterior fabric of some buildings, such as wooden window frames, is in need of attention.

There are adequate facilities for food preparation and dining. The kitchen is kept in a hygienic state.

There are very good outdoor facilities, including a well-maintained sports field, used for football, athletics and other sports. The heated outdoor swimming pool is used effectively for many months of the year. Pupils benefit from the facility as they develop confidence in water from an early age and learn correct breathing and swimming techniques.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

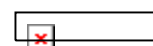
The school meets all but one of the requirements.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure there is a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of the exterior of window frames (paragraph 5(q)).

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school provides most but not all of the information required for parents. The prospectus lacks detail and provides too little information on the curriculum. It contains out-of-date information about some facilities such as a science laboratory and library. These have been converted to other uses. Parents and prospective parents are not, as a matter of course, given information about admissions, discipline and exclusions. Prospective parents are given the opportunity for a lengthy discussion with the headteacher about the school's provision and a tour around the school before their child is admitted.

Communication between school and home is good with informative termly bulletins and regular topical newsletters sent home. Brief reports on pupils' progress are issued each half term with more detailed reports at the end of autumn and spring terms. Parents are generally pleased with the information they receive from the school and they feel welcome whenever they visit. Ready and regular access to teachers is available when pupils are brought to school and collected at the end of the day. These times provide a very valuable forum for the exchange of information.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

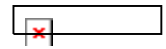
In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:
ensure parents and prospective parents are informed of:

- o admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e)); and

ensure parents and prospective parents are made aware that information is available regarding:

- o the school curriculum (paragraph 6(2)(g)).

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints



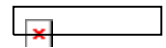
The school has a written complaints policy which meets the requirements. It is available to parents and sets out clear time scales and the procedures the school will follow in the management of a complaint.

The school has had no complaints requiring a panel meeting to date.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	St Faith's School at Ash		
DfES ref number:	886/6059		
Type of school:	Pre-preparatory and Preparatory		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 104,	Girls 92,	Total 196
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 14,	Girls 14,	Total 28
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 0,	Girls 0,	Total 0
Annual fees (day pupils):	£2,454 - £4,749		
Address of school:	5 The Street Ash Canterbury Kent CT3 2HH		
E-mail address:	St-faithsatash@tinyworld.co.uk		
Telephone number:	01304 813255		
Fax number:	01304 813235		
Headteacher:	Mr SGI Kerruish		
Proprietor:	Mr and Mrs Kerruish		

Lead Inspector:
Dates of inspection:

Mrs P Hoey
4 - 7 July 2005

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