

Salcombe Preparatory School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	308/6055
Unique Reference Number	102063
URN for registered childcare	EY40949
Inspection number	330421
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended. The inspection of childcare was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of registered provision¹ was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

Information about the school

Salcombe Preparatory School is a co-educational independent school. The school was established in 1918 and now occupies two neighbouring sites in Southgate. The school caters for pupils aged from the age of four to eleven. There are currently 230 pupils taught in 19 classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises three classes for 27 children and the school also provides wrap around care with a breakfast and after school provision. The school was last inspected in May 2002 and the Early Years Foundation Stage in June 2008. The present owners purchased the school in 2005. The headteacher took up the post in September 2008.

The school aims to prepare pupils for entry to grammar and independent schools and *'is focused on promoting the highest academic achievements whilst pursuing a full programme of cultural, social and moral education within a stimulating and happy environment.'*

Evaluation of the school

Salcombe is a good school including good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is successful in preparing pupils to gain entry to selective grammar and independent schools. The school's cheerful, friendly ethos is clearly apparent. The pupils are polite, articulate and courteous and show positive attitudes to learning. Almost all of the regulations are met and those not met at the time of the last inspection have all been addressed.

Quality of education

The school's curriculum is good; it places a strong emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The English curriculum aims to develop the core language skills to meet the common entrance requirements. The mathematics

¹ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

curriculum includes an appropriate emphasis on all areas adjusted to suit the needs of higher attaining pupils. As a result, by the time they leave the school, the majority of pupils make good progress in these subjects and reach standards well above their age-related expectations. Planning for a suitably broad range of other subjects is shared with parents every term. Opportunities for pupils to develop creatively are enhanced by an excellent choir. Although there is limited time within the curriculum for specific lessons in personal, social and emotional education pupils develop well in these areas.

Teaching and assessment are good overall. Across the school and including the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers successfully establish a purposeful and respectful atmosphere and encourage in their pupils a positive attitude to their learning. The small classes ensure that teachers know each pupil well. Teachers often provide a good level of individual support, which is a significant factor in helping pupils make good progress. Pupils concentrate very well in the majority of lessons and are keen to complete the tasks given to them. Where teaching is effective it includes the full range of pupils who are all expected to participate and respond to questions. In a small minority of lessons, pupils who are less forthcoming do not contribute with sufficient regularity. In the better teaching, individual assessments of progress are used well to set different learning tasks within a single lesson.

The school's procedures to assess pupils' achievements are good. A new tracking system shows pupils' attainment over an academic year. These assessments are used effectively by senior staff to identify variations in progress and to agree specific actions to address any perceived slowing of progress. As a result, such pupils receive focused support which helps them to improve and make good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. As a result pupils' self-esteem and their self-confidence are developed successfully and pupils are particularly articulate in expressing themselves. Pupils enjoy their education, as evident in their good attendance, and many made verbal and written comments to support this. One pupil echoed the feelings of the majority and wrote, 'I like everything about Salcombe and I am happy here'. Pupils speak with pride about their involvement in raising funds for a wide range of charities.

Pupils' spiritual development across the school is satisfactory overall but variable. It is enhanced by the school choir which provides exceptional experiences in developing pupils' spiritual appreciation of the world around them. A few pupils expressed concerns via inspection questionnaires about poor behaviour affecting their work. However, the inspectors' view is that behaviour is good and pupils work and play well together, although they are a little boisterous during lunchtime play. Pupils are polite and courteous around the school and they show very positive attitudes to learning.

The new headteacher has recorded plans to create a school council as a way of involving pupils more fully. Older pupils take on responsibilities as prefects and house captains but opportunities for younger pupils to take on such roles are limited. 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. In addition to their strong development of English and mathematics, pupils regularly participate in teamwork and use information technology and this prepares them well for their future lives. The school has some 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 the pupils

The school makes satisfactory 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 both eat and play safely. As junior school pupils arrive in the morning and occasionally at lunchtimes, their supervision, strong at all other times, is only satisfactory. Pupils say they feel safe. However, a few junior pupils expressed concerns about behaviour and about who to approach for help at lunchtimes. Parents reported that the school could do more to support pupils during their transfer from the infant department into the junior department. This was confirmed when speaking with pupils who had transferred recently.

Appropriate policies are in place including those for educational visits, first aid, fire risk and accidents. However, many of these policies have been reviewed only very recently and are not fully embedded in practice. General health and safety risk assessments are in place. Fire drills and alarm checks are carried out. There are staff trained in First Aid on both sites. Staff have received training in child protection. The school has carried out an accessibility audit of the Chase Side site and improvements have been made. The school meets its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has completed thorough and appropriate checks on all new employees prior to their appointment. It has in place a central record which gives details of all the statutory checks which have been carried out on permanent staff. It ensures that all supply staff have the appropriate clearance and checks but does not currently formally record the completion of these checks in the central record.

School's premises and accommodation

Staggered playtimes at the junior site ensure pupils have sufficient space to exercise. The school has plans to address the standing water in the junior playground which currently further restricts the limited play area. There are sufficient washroom facilities within both sites. Those in the junior building adjacent to the playground are cold and in need of redecoration; the school has plans in place to address this. Desks

and chairs in the majority of classes have been replaced. There is a phased programme to replace the few remaining wooden desks and chairs. The computer suite at the junior site is in the process of being upgraded. Whilst the infant site provides appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, which meet requirements, the restrictions on space in the junior site mean that pupils wait for their parents in the school office.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school prospectus and a well set-out website provide parents and prospective parents with most of the required information. The qualifications of staff are not published. The school's policies are listed but it is not consistently clear how parents can obtain copies of some policies. The school has adopted a complaints policy and reports that there have been no formal complaints in the previous twelve months. However parents report a lack of awareness of how to register a formal complaint when informal procedures have not been sufficient to resolve an issue. Written reports are sent to parents twice a year and include clear evaluations of pupils' progress. There are also regular face-to-face parent meetings. Parents are informed about the destinations for previous Year 6 pupils but not of details of their academic performance gauged against the national picture.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints policy meets all requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and all the requirements are met in full. Children in the Reception classes receive a good start to their education, with many making very good progress from their various starting points. They settle in quickly and clearly love learning in a caring and supportive environment. Teaching is consistently good. Children rapidly gain in confidence because teachers and classroom assistants celebrate their efforts and successes. There is an appropriate balance between adult-directed activities and those chosen by the children themselves. Children benefit from the close partnerships between parents and staff. Healthy eating is encouraged through the wholesome food provided. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and the well organised systems ensure its smooth day-to-day running.

Children's care and well-being are given paramount importance, enabling them to flourish in a safe and secure environment. The resources for the outdoor provision are much improved, and used effectively to enhance children's learning in line with their experiences in the classroom. Children regularly experience and enjoy the well-planned outdoor activities. Teachers are aware of the need to plan lessons with clear objectives for children's learning; however, not all focus on these during lessons or use them for assessing how well children have learnt. Children's social and emotional

development is good. Children work well together in groups and sustain their interest in all activities. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is assessed regularly to provide a clear picture of their needs. However the procedures for the on-going observations of children's learning and development are not fully established.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that the checks on supply staff are formally recorded in the central register (paragraph 4 C (4and 5)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide facilities for pupils who are ill on the junior site (paragraph 5 (l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the qualifications of all staff in the information available to parents (paragraph 6 2 (k)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve the use of daily assessments to set clear learning objectives that match individual pupils' needs in the main school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- ensure the consistent use of strategies to involve all pupils in active learning
- ensure that welfare, health and safety policies are fully embedded in practice.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

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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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		✓		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		✓		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		✓		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		✓		

School details

Name of school	Salcombe Preparatory School
DCSF number	308/6055
Unique reference number	102063
EY URN	EY 40949
Type of school	Preparatory
Status	Independent day school
Date school opened	1918
Age range of pupils	4–11years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 140 Girls: 90 Total: 230
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7890
Address of school	224-226 Chase Side Southgate London N14 4PL
Telephone number	020 8441 5282; 020 8441 5356
Fax number	020 8441 5282
Email address	berni.curzon@salcombeprep.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr Bernard Curzon
Proprietor	Cognita Ltd
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI
Dates of inspection	27–28 January 2009