

# St John's Preparatory and Senior School Limited

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	308/6062
Unique Reference Number	102065
URN for registered childcare	EY240908
Inspection number	333816
Inspection dates	17 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005). 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 by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

## Information about the school

St John's Preparatory and Senior School is a co-educational day school set in 28 acres of green belt countryside to the southern side of the M25 motorway, near to Enfield. The majority of pupils live within a 10 mile radius of the school. The school is on two sites, less than half a mile apart. The preparatory school provides places for 195 pupils between the ages of 4 and 11 years of age, and the senior school for 243 pupils and students between the ages of 11 plus and 18. There are no pupils with statements of special educational learning needs and none that require support because English is not their mother tongue. The school emphasises its Christian ethos but is not a faith school. Its mission statement is expressed as: *'Education makes a man or woman fit company for him or herself'*.

## Evaluation of the school

St John's Preparatory and Senior School provides a good quality of education for all its pupils. Results in public examinations, including at GCSE and A level, confirm that most pupils make outstanding progress as they move through the school. Their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils feel well cared for and those parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire overwhelmingly express their support for the work of the school. The school successfully meets its core aim for the personal development of young people and provides outstanding opportunities for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Whilst maintaining the high standards recorded during the last inspection, improvements have been made in several other aspects of the provision previously identified as not meeting requirements. The preparatory school has achieved 'Healthy School' status. However, provision for pupils' welfare is inadequate because the safeguarding policy, although appropriate, has not been implemented effectively. Further improvements are still required in relation to washroom and toilet facilities. In addition, the facilities for pupils who may become ill, established since the last inspection in the preparatory school, are still not adequate.

## Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. It has a number of outstanding features and provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress. The provision meets the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities, including those identified by the school as requiring additional support to meet particular learning difficulties. Pupils at all levels have access to all the required areas of learning. Provision follows the guidance of the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum. In the preparatory school at Key Stage 1, literacy and numeracy are taught separately, with an 'inter-disciplinary topic' approach adopted for the remaining subjects. In Key Stage 2 all subjects are taught separately. Music, French, drama, LAMDA (London Academy for Dramatic Arts – development of communication skills) and games are provided throughout the Key Stages. The broad and well-balanced senior school curriculum at Key Stage 3 provides pupils with the opportunity of learning both French and German. Drama is taught as part of the English curriculum. At Key Stage 4 the wide range of subjects available includes law and the opportunity of studying physics, chemistry and biology separately. Given the relatively small size of the current sixth form, students are provided with a very good range of options to study at A level. The curriculum is enriched by the wide range of clubs, activities and visits available to pupils and students. In all of this work, the school aims to develop pupils' confidence and communication skills. Although pupils have access to information and communication technology (ICT), it is not yet used throughout the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development is supported throughout the curriculum and through a well-planned personal social and health education (PSHE) programme, which includes careers education. It is also supported by religious education, assemblies, wider aspects of curriculum and the range of extra-curricular opportunities. These elements of the curriculum are central to the values of the school in developing the whole person. The PSHE programme is supported by visiting speakers, for example police and fire officers and a nurse. The curriculum successfully meets the school's core aim of providing a range of opportunities and learning experiences which prepare young people well for adult life.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. As a result most pupils make outstanding progress. Over a third of the lessons observed during the inspection were of outstanding quality. The school has established procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching. Pupils and students of all ages and abilities usually respond well to the opportunities provided through the curriculum. Teachers are well qualified for the subjects and age ranges of pupils that they teach. They generally plan their lessons well. In the best lessons throughout the school, well-structured activities ensure that learning proceeds at a good pace. Relationships between teachers and their pupils in lessons are good. Pupils on the whole respond very well to their teachers. However, on occasions in prep school lessons they are inattentive or distracted. In these lessons time is wasted due to inadequacies in the lesson planning. Pupils' response in the senior school is invariably good. Good questioning is a feature of most lessons. In the best lessons it engages pupils of all abilities in the

learning and encourages them to think independently by, for example, making use of previous learning to answer the teacher's questions.

Assessment is good. The school has good procedures in place for tracking the pupils' progress. Testing is used regularly in the senior school. Pupils receive suitable written feedback on their work which is marked regularly and thoroughly. The school emphasises the importance of pupils being aware of, and assessing, their own progress. Despite the strengths of assessment overall, occasionally in the prep school teachers do not use this information to plan effectively for the needs of all the pupils in their classes.

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

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. This reflects the emphasis placed by the school on guiding the development of the whole person. The positive relationships in the school and their broad learning experiences enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence very well. The students say that they enjoy being at the school. School and class rules help pupils to develop an understanding of right and wrong and to respect the law. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are expected to accept a high degree of responsibility for their behaviour, to show initiative and to develop an understanding of how they can contribute to community life. In most cases they respond well to the expectations set by the school. They have a very good understanding of the rights and responsibilities of young people and there are good opportunities for them to become aware of such social issues as homelessness and disadvantage, including through collecting for associated charities.

Pupils have a good level of general knowledge of citizenship and how the country is run. They visit the Houses of Parliament and meet with the local Member of Parliament. Pupils are encouraged to run competitions and they regularly attend concerts. They develop a good understanding of their own and the wider community. In costing and planning menus to appeal to young people of different cultural traditions, pupils were careful to consider the wishes of everyone. Regular contact with adults who run enterprises and visits from experts helps pupils to speak knowledgeably about running businesses. The school guides pupils in acquiring a very good appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions. Pupils know they have a role in helping one another and they do this automatically, following the excellent model set for them by adults.

## Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The quality of the provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate overall. This is because the school has a clear policy for safeguarding children which meets regulatory requirements, but it has not been implemented effectively. The school has responded to the issues raised by the last inspection. Staff are now appropriately trained in child protection. Appropriate procedures are established with

regard to accidents that may occur and the school fulfils its duty with respect to the Disability Discrimination Act. Carefully prepared procedures are in place for dealing with fire and emergencies should they occur. Checks made on new staff are thorough and appropriately recorded. Some improvements have been made to the provision of toilets and washrooms for staff and pupils but this development has still to be completed. The school has responded to the need to provide facilities for pupils who are ill during the school day, but these are not adequate in the preparatory school. Pupils throughout the school are appropriately encouraged to be healthy, despite the break-time biscuit that is appreciated by all. The quality of lunches provided by the school is remarkably high. Inspectors did not agree with concerns about food expressed by a small minority of parents and pupils.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision in the Reception classes is good, and the children make good progress, particularly in their personal, language and mathematical development. All six areas of learning and development are covered in the planning and children's learning and development is carefully observed and recorded to show the progress they make towards the early learning goals (ELG). Children play well both together and on their own. Relationships are very positive at all levels and children from different backgrounds and cultures play well together. There is a positive learning atmosphere in all the rooms, which are attractive and welcoming environments. Staff are good role models and take time to spend with each child, valuing them as individuals. However, the curriculum is too structured with limited resources, particularly in ICT, for child-initiated activities and independent learning. The extensive outdoor area is not sufficiently used as an outside classroom. The children are well cared for; healthy eating is encouraged through the wholesome and varied food provided. The co-ordinator has a clear plan to address the relevant issues, but this can present a challenge as she does not teach within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- implement consistently its policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007).

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

- provide sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including pupils with special needs (paragraph 5(k))
- improve facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l)).

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- develop the use of ICT across the curriculum in the preparatory and senior schools
- plan for an outside classroom including large scale climbing equipment in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- ensure the youngest children have greater access to more stimulating resources, for example, musical instruments, sand/water, dressing up materials and more multi-cultural resources
- ensure children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have greater opportunities for learning independently.

# 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	St John's Preparatory and Senior School Limited
DCSF number	308/6062
Unique reference number	102065
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY240908
Type of school	Preparatory and senior day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1988
Age range of pupils	4–18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 251      Girls: 187      Total: 438
Annual fees	£7,140 - £8,610
Address of school	The Ridgeway Potters Bar Enfield Herts EN6 5QT
Telephone number	01707 657294
Fax number	02083 634439
Email address	stjohnsschool@aol.com; poppytardios@aol.com
Headteacher	Mrs C Tardios
Proprietor	Mrs C Tardios
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell
Dates of inspection	17 March 2009