

St John's Preparatory and Senior School

The Ridgeway, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 5QT

Inspection dates

12–14 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteachers of the school provide inspirational, determined leadership. They are role models for leaders and staff, who share their vision. Collectively, they ensure that pupils benefit from an outstanding quality of education. As a result, outcomes are outstanding.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding. Pupils are kept safe and secure. They are confident, happy, well-behaved, motivated learners, who typically feel that the school community is 'like a family'. Pupils of all ages across both sites are welcoming and friendly.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding because they result in exceptional achievement for pupils. Occasionally, teaching does not challenge pupils to make the swift progress they are capable of.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- The curriculum is rich. It entices and inspires pupils to achieve well in a wide range of subjects within and beyond the school day. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next phase of their education.
- The sixth form is outstanding. International students have an exceptionally positive experience at the school. Leaders ensure that the exact needs of each individual sixth-form student are identified and met so that all students experience success in their chosen subjects.
- The early years provision is good. Some variability in the coverage of the curriculum and in the quality of teaching impacts on the progress children make across this phase.

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?

- Strengthen outcomes even further by ensuring that all teachers consistently:
 - give pupils time to articulate their thinking and reasoning during lessons
 - stretch and deepen pupils' understanding by asking precise, well-targeted questions.
- Improve the early years provision by ensuring that practitioners:
 - meet the needs of children who are at different stages in developing their writing skills to help them make consistently strong progress
 - provide more opportunities for children to apply and use their emerging mathematics skills across all areas of learning in the Reception Year.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, leaders throughout the school have worked tirelessly and extremely effectively to ensure that all the independent school standards are met. They have successfully maintained an outstanding quality of education for pupils.
- The headteachers are inspiring leaders. They are role models for other leaders, whom they motivate and develop extremely well. They have collectively succeeded in their goal to offer a primary, secondary and sixth-form provision of 'outstanding academic excellence'. Within this context of high achievement, the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. There is a culture of care, kindness and respect evident across the school, which the headteachers have carefully and successfully cultivated.
- Leaders are incisive and accurate in their monitoring of teaching. They have extremely high expectations of teachers. They rigorously challenge and support teachers to be the best that they can be.
- The curriculum is rich, broad and exciting. It inspires pupils. As one pupil put it, 'There are amazing opportunities here!' A wide range of subjects are taught within and beyond the normal school day. There are many special features of the curriculum on offer. Pupils benefit from specialist drama, music, sports and art teaching. The school publishes an impressive 'music matters' magazine which celebrates pupils' significant achievement in this subject. Facilities across the provision are of exceptionally high quality. Sports and technology facilities are state of the art. Pupils regularly complete homework which helps them to make excellent progress.
- Pupils benefit greatly from an extensive range of trips outside the school. They visit the theatre often. Trips to the Houses of Parliament support their deep understanding of the rule of law and democracy. During the inspection, pupils observed debates around Brexit and, on their return to school, were able to confidently and eloquently express their well-considered views on the subject.
- The curriculum promotes British values and contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Within the broadly Christian ethos of the school, there are many opportunities for pupils to meet people of other faiths and learn about different religions.
- A special feature of the curriculum offered at the school is that all key stage 4 pupils get the opportunity to study the exact combination of subjects that they wish to. In the sixth form, students receive one-to-one tuition if they choose to study a subject that nobody else has selected.
- Parents and carers who expressed views about the school were largely positive about its work.
- The school's website is compliant but leaders recognise that it needs updating to make it more accessible to parents.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a culture of vigilance evident across the school. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured that there is a forensic approach to ensuring that both sites are safe and secure. The health and safety of pupils are given the highest priority. Leaders have acted upon sound guidance and advice secured from external consultants to ensure that all the independent school standards relating to the premises and to health and safety are met. For example, a recent fire audit completed by the fire service found the school to be 100% compliant with requirements.
- There is an efficient and well-managed approach to referring concerns about pupils. This is consistently used by all staff. Leaders seek appropriate advice and support from external agencies.
- The open, inclusive culture of the school promotes all aspects of pupils' physical and mental health. Pupils benefit from art therapy and counselling when appropriate to their needs.
- Staff are thoroughly and effectively trained. Several leaders are trained as designated safeguarding leads.
- The school has an effective accessibility plan. Leaders are kept well informed about the needs of pupils with medical conditions so that they can be cared for appropriately at school.
- International pupils are well cared for in school and speak highly of their host families, who are vetted by the Disclosure and Barring Service. Leaders make all appropriate checks on staff when they are recruited. The single central record of checks made is meticulously kept.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Trusting, respectful relationships between adults and pupils underpin learning.
- Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge within all subjects taught. Specialist drama, music, art and sports teaching is of the highest quality and leads to exceptional outcomes.
- Teachers across the primary, secondary and sixth form systematically review pupils' work to check understanding and adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs. Targets are precise and reviewed regularly to ensure that they are swiftly met. Short-term intervention and one-to-one support have a good impact on pupils' achievement. They do this extremely well to ensure that all pupils make consistently strong progress.
- Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 develop competent reading skills. As a result, they are able swiftly to access all the curriculum has to offer when they move to the secondary site.
- There is a competitive edge to pupils' attitude to learning which teachers use positively to help pupils achieve the best that they can.
- Strong questioning to deepen pupils' thinking is evident across the school. However, there is some variation in the precision of teachers' questioning to swiftly move pupils on in their learning. Occasionally, teachers 'jump in' too quickly when pupils have not had

sufficient thinking time or talking time to really focus on and engage with the questions asked. This occasionally prevents them from making the progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The principles of the 2010 Equalities Act underpin all aspects of the school's work. Leaders and staff create a harmonious, safe community in which pupils thrive. Each individual pupil is valued and respected within the community. Pupils are self-motivated, confident, assured learners who are never complacent about their learning but believe that they always need to strive to deepen their knowledge and improve their skills further.
- The personal, social and emotional aspect of the curriculum helps pupils to become ambitious for their future lives and careers. It equips them with a good understanding of health and safety and ensures that they develop self-belief and self-respect.
- Pupils are tolerant and respectful of all faiths, religions and cultures. Pupils welcome their international peers, who swiftly become part of this cohesive, nurturing community.
- Pupils express absolute confidence in their safety at school and receive good guidance on how to keep themselves safe in the outside world.
- Pupils are well supported in their transitions to the next phase of their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave very well during lessons. Typically, they are engrossed in learning. Behaviour at playtimes, lunchtimes and as pupils move around the school is excellent.
- Pupils exemplify the calm, polite, well-mannered disposition which leaders consistently model to them.
- There are clear sanctions for behaviour which is anything less than excellent. These are applied consistently and effectively on the rare occasions when this is necessary.
- Pupils attend well, which reflects the value they place on school and on their education.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' attainment over time across all phases of the school has been consistently above the national average for several years.
- Work in books shows that pupils who are currently in the primary, secondary and sixth form are making excellent progress from their starting points, many of which are higher than those seen nationally.
- A high proportion of pupils in Year 6 are already working at the highest standards expected for the end of the primary phase in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' work throughout key stage 3 is consistently completed and is of a high quality.

- Achievement at the end of key stage 4 is outstanding. Pupils' work in books shows strong, sustained progress over time. Work seen in English and mathematics books was excellent and of a high standard.
- Pupils achieve high outcomes in many aspects of the curriculum. They win awards for debating and are champion footballers. They achieve excellence in music, sports and drama.

Early years provision

Good

- The proportion of children who achieve a good overall level of development by the time they leave the Reception Year is above the national average.
- Leaders have drawn on external consultant advice to develop the early years provision. Teaching is developing but there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the phase. Not all practitioners are confident in the teaching of early writing and phonics and they have not yet been given appropriate professional development to help them in this area. As a result, the most able developing writers currently in the Reception Year are not making the progress of which they are capable. For example, the expectation of 'a sentence a day' limits what some of the early writers achieve. Those children who have the lowest starting points in writing sometimes receive guidance and tasks which do not systematically help them to apply their emerging knowledge of writing letters and sounds.
- Practitioners in the Nursery class work exceptionally well as a team. They support each other and learn to hone their teaching skills together. Teachers and assistants are skilful in questioning and challenging learners to achieve well across all areas of learning. They think creatively to devise inspiring interesting activities to entice children to learning. Warm, nurturing relationships between adults and children are heart-warming. The children see their teachers as role models. They play 'being teachers' and this exemplifies perfectly their perceptions of how wonderful their teachers are.
- The early years learning spaces are delightful and reflect all areas of learning very well. Outdoor learning is a strong key feature of learning. The Nursery 'reading den' promotes a love of reading. Practitioners carefully select exciting interesting books to read with children in the den. Children join in with key phrases and role-play characters with gusto!
- Teachers ensure that all areas of learning are focused on in the early years. However, in the Reception class, early number skills are not given a similar emphasis to early literacy skills. Practitioners take photographs of achievement in this area but there is very little evidence in the provision of the learning 'journey' children make to attain as highly as they do in this aspect of their learning. In the Nursery class, carefully thought-out problem-solving tasks and activities support children to apply and develop their understanding of number, shape and space.
- Children are kept safe and secure in the early years. Leaders made some minor changes to ensure extra security around entry points to the early years during the inspection.
- The school meets all the independent school standards relating to the early years.

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching in the sixth form reflects that in the primary and secondary phases. It is outstanding and enables students to achieve exceptionally well in their chosen subjects. Any variation in attainment in subjects identified during previous inspections has been addressed.
- Students in the sixth form are confident, high-achieving young people who are more than ready to face the demands and challenges of the next stage of education and of life as a global citizen.
- Careers guidance is tailor-made for individual students, who are aspirational for their future.
- Students feel safe and cared for.
- Leaders manage the sixth form with confidence and competence. Students and staff are rightly proud of their achievements.
- Students are given bespoke individualised support for their learning.
- The international students thrive within the nurturing, challenging culture of the sixth form. Their English language skills are swiftly and skilfully built upon. Teachers ensure that immersion in the English language and British culture is lively and engaging.

School details

Unique reference number	102065
DfE registration number	308/6062
Inspection number	10067116

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	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	53
Number of part-time pupils	21
Proprietor	Andrew and Calliope Tardios
Headteachers	Andrew and Calliope Tardios
Annual fees (day pupils)	£10,350 to £13,620
Telephone number	01707 657 294
Website	www.stjohnsprepschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@stjohnsschool.enfield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February–2 March 2017

Information about this school

- St John's Preparatory and Senior School is an independent day school in the London Borough of Enfield.
- The headteachers are also the joint proprietors. There is no governing body. Leaders secure external support from consultants to help them evaluate the school's work.
- The school consists of two sites which are approximately a mile apart.
- The school admits international students to the sixth form.

- Since the previous inspection, the school has opened the Nursery class.
- The school does not use alternate providers.
- The school has a 'broadly Christian' ethos.
- The previous full standard inspection was 28 February 2017. A progress monitoring inspection took place in August 2017 and a material change inspection took place in August 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the headteachers and the deputy headteachers and an external early years consultant who supports the school.
- Inspectors met with members of the leadership team and two external advisers who support the school. Inspectors talked with leaders about their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors undertook detailed premises checks on both sites with leaders to ensure that the school was compliant with the relevant independent school standards.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils to discuss their learning, to listen to some of them read and to hear their views on the school.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in their lessons, during their playtimes and as they moved around the building.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They examined school records relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of the 56 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors scrutinised a large sample of books to see what progress current pupils have made across a range of subjects.

Inspection team

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