

The Fulham Preparatory School Limited

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	205/6390
Unique Reference Number	131165
URN for registered childcare	584536
Inspection number	330450
Inspection dates	26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI

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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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



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.

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

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

Fulham Preparatory is a pre-preparatory and preparatory co-educational school located in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. The school is based in two separate sites about a mile apart. One site houses the pre-preparatory school for children and pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, and the second building is for pupils in Year 3 to Year 8. The school opened in 1996. The current preparatory building was opened in 2003. There are 570 pupils on roll, aged four to thirteen years. The school aims are that 'all the students should not only reach their potential, but exceed it, giving them the confidence to set their sights high. This may be achieved through academic channels or through sport, art, music, drama or whatever inspires the particular individual. The school provides a relaxed vibrant and happy environment, with clearly defined boundaries, in which the students are able to meet all the challenges of their education'. The school was last inspected in May 2005.

Evaluation of the school

Fulham Preparatory School Limited provides a good quality of education and meets its aims well. There are some outstanding features. The wide ranging curriculum is good. Teaching is good across the whole school. As a result pupils make good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and their behaviour is outstanding. The provision for pupils' welfare health and safety is outstanding. The school now meets all the regulatory requirements, some of which were not met at the time of the last inspection. Information for parents, carers and other agencies is clear, accurate and up-to-date. Although a small number of parents are not aware of the school's complaints procedures, they are clearly available as required.

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.

Quality of education

The good curriculum is well balanced, practical and relevant. It meets the needs of the significant majority of pupils very well from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Year 8. There are good plans for all subjects which are well led by Heads of Department. Curriculum provision is still developing in two areas; the first is the lack of breadth in the programme of study to support pupils' understanding of other religions, faiths and cultures. The second is the provision of information about careers and future learning opportunities for the older pupils is not systematic enough. The school is aware of this and has already begun to make appropriate plans.

The curriculum's strengths are in the specialist provision. This enables pupils of all ages to learn effectively about information and communication technology (ICT), French, music, and Latin and, for added breadth, philosophy. There is a very wide range of extra-curricular opportunities which include chess, chamber choir, and swimming. As one pupil said 'there are so many activities, you could be here every day from Year 1 to Year 8 and you still wouldn't be able to do everything!' The school makes good use of its location in London by arranging many trips to the main museums, theatres and art galleries. There are also many opportunities for pupils to go on visits to France, Devon and Somerset to study geography, environmental science and outdoor pursuits.

The quality of teaching and assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest of the school is good. The good lesson planning enables pupils to know what they need to do and gives structure to practical, exciting and interesting lessons. Many pupils wrote to the inspectors saying that they found the lessons 'fun' and that they 'help us learn a lot'. Pupils benefit from lessons taught in small classes by well qualified and experienced teachers with good knowledge of their subjects. In most lessons, there are opportunities for pupils to discuss their work with each other and gain practical experiences. As a result, they make good progress and deepen their understanding. In just a few lessons, there is a tendency for some teachers to talk to the whole class for too long, not taking the different abilities of pupils into account. Where this happens, pupils' learning slows down. Using the wide range of pupil assessment and testing information available, most teachers are able to pitch activities at the right level to ensure that most pupils make good progress. In a few cases, documented learning intentions are not as sharply focused as they might be on what pupils should learn. The pupils commented favourably on their relationships with their teachers; 'they're kind to us' and '... help us pass exams'. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well catered for. The school makes good use of support from different agencies and its own specialist support team. As a result, these pupils make good progress.

The school is effective in accumulating assessment and test information about the attainment of pupils by using a range of nationally standardised tests in each year group on a regular basis. The school uses this information well to track individual pupils' progress. There are sound plans to use this information more analytically to

gain a more effective overview of each year group's performance over time. This is not fully effective at present. Marking of pupils' work is regular and teachers' feedback on how to improve ranges from written to verbal comments. Many pupils have targets on how to improve their work in a variety of subjects. Pupils' progress over their time in the school is good, and by the time they leave in Year 6 and Year 8, a very high proportion of pupils pass the common entrance exams and are successful in gaining places at the schools of their first choice.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. From an early age most pupils enjoy their school life and their high attendance reflects this. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Work is well presented and there are many bright and interesting displays around the school which exemplify pupils' good presentation in writing, art and design technology. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Their keenness and excitement in nearly all lessons is palpable. They are extremely polite and in some lessons ask good questions. Pupils' development of their skills and knowledge in literacy, numeracy, ICT and interpersonal skills is above average. As a result they are well prepared for their future economic well-being. The school invites visitors, including parents, to talk to pupils about their jobs. The school has made a good start in developing pupils' contributions to the school and community at large. Examples include fund raising for Barnardo's and raising money to help build a school in Kenya. Pupils enjoy their responsibilities which include head of school, prefects and librarians. To help pupils gain a better understanding of British institutions, there have been visits to the Houses of Parliament and the local MP has visited the school. The school does celebrate some religious festivals during the year and pupils told inspectors of how they enjoyed meeting pupils from different parts of the world who attended the school. However, while pupils gain the appropriate insights into other cultures, there is no regular programme across the school to support pupils' better understanding and respect for different cultures and beliefs.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. All the regulations are met. At the time of the last inspection there were some regulations not met regarding the school's admissions register and administrative procedures for the recruitment of staff. There are very robust procedures for appointing staff and all safeguarding procedures are in place including the required single central register. The school environment is friendly, very safe and well maintained. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with each other and the staff. The very few incidents of bullying are dealt with efficiently. There have been no exclusions. Pupils have a good awareness of how to live healthy lifestyles and, although a few parents and children expressed a wish for more sporting activities, there is a wide range of these and the school provides good facilities. Healthy meals are cooked on the premises of the prep school and delivered to the pre-prep. Risk assessments are efficiently carried out to ensure pupils' health and safety in and out of the school. The school has a good

access development policy and plan which meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of provision in this phase is good. Children start their education in school with knowledge and skills that are generally in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning, with major strengths in their personal, social and emotional development as well as their reading and writing skills. Staff plan exciting learning opportunities in both indoor and outdoor play. They take some observations to inform future planning and assessment. However, assessment is not used rigorously to provide enough challenge for the more able. Children respond with enjoyment to the learning environment and achieve well because their needs are well served by the broad and balanced curriculum. Teaching is good. French enriches the curriculum and provides learning opportunities for children to develop their linguistic skills as well as their cultural insights. Children enjoy school, as reflected in their exemplary behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and respectful relationships. Staff are sensitive to the children's needs and support their personal as well as their social and emotional development. As a result, children feel safe and valued and can approach members of staff for help and support when required. Staff work in partnership with parents and have developed close links with agencies ensuring the appropriate support and guidance for the children. Leadership and management are good. Staff work well together, and have regular opportunities for their professional development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

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 a systematic approach to providing careers education and guidance opportunities, especially for the older pupils
- develop a cohesive programme which supports pupils' understanding and tolerance of different cultures and beliefs
- use the assessment information to gain a clearer and comparative overview of how different year groups make progress over time.
- use assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage rigorously to challenge the more able.

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	The Fulham Preparatory School Limited		
DCSF number	205/6390		
Unique reference number	131165		
EY URN	584536		
Type of school	Co-educational pre-prep and prep		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1996		
Age range of pupils	4-13 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 343	Girls: 227	Total: 570
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 12645		
Address of school	Pre-prep: 47A Fulham High Street, London SW6 3JJ		
	Prep: 200 Greyhound Rd, London W14 9SD		
Telephone number	0207 386 2441		
Fax number	0207 386 2449		
Email address	prepadmin@fulhamprep.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs J Emmett		
Proprietor	The Fulham Prep School Ltd		
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI		
Dates of inspection	26 February 2009		