

The Fulham Prep School Limited

200 Greyhound Road, London, W14 9SD

Inspection dates	3 – 5 June 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding school because

- The combination of outstanding teaching and a broad, balanced and rich curriculum enables pupils to achieve exceptionally well throughout the school in most subjects including English and mathematics.
- Pupils make at least good progress and most make outstanding progress, whatever their individual starting points.
- Pupils who have specific learning difficulties make the same rapid progress as their peers as a result of excellent specialist provision and some achieve as highly.
- Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science range from high to exceptionally high from Reception onwards and so pupils are prepared extremely well for the next stage of their education.
- Teaching is mostly outstanding and never less than good. It is underpinned by high expectations of what pupils can achieve and good subject knowledge. The use of specialist teaching from Reception onwards is a great strength.

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding as a result of strong pastoral care, stimulating teaching and exciting learning opportunities that support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceedingly well.
- Pupils appreciate working in a happy, warm and relaxed learning atmosphere that enables them to flourish without being unduly stressed by the pressure of examinations.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is exceptional and pupils feel safe and free from harassment.
- The principal, who is also the proprietor of the school, has ensured that all standards for independent schools and requirements of the Early Years Foundations Stage are met.
- The principal knows the school extremely well and provides the senior leaders with clear direction and the right mix of support and challenge to inspire them to pursue excellence. The school has identified the correct priorities for further improvement.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

■ The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 24 lessons, taught by 24 different teachers, and two of these lessons were observed jointly with the principal. They also listened to pupils reading.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, teachers, pre-preparatory and preparatory coordinators, heads of department, pastoral leaders, senior leaders and the principal. They examined a wide range of records and documents including pupils' work, teachers' planning and assessments, and policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils in all circumstances.
- The inspectors also took account of the responses in 90 questionnaires completed by staff and 107 parental responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Michèle Messaoudi, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Joanna Jones	Additional Inspector
Rory O'Doherty	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Fulham Prep is a non-selective pre-preparatory and preparatory co-educational school located in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. The school opened in 1996 and is registered for up to 702 pupils aged from four to 13 years. It is based in two separate sites about a mile apart. One site houses the pre-preparatory school for children and pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2; the other building, opened in 2003, is for pupils in Years 3 to 8. The school uses local facilities for games, swimming and some extra-curricular activities. The school had a 'light touch' inspection in February 2009 and a progress monitoring inspection in May 2012.
- Currently, there are 597 pupils on roll, aged from four to 13 years. Of these, 90 children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 154 are in Key Stage 1, 302 are in Key Stage 2 and 51 in Key Stage 3. The school supports 56 pupils who have specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational needs. Pupils have diverse cultural heritages, with most being of White British heritage. Some pupils are bilingual and none is at an early stage of learning English. Most pupils who leave at the end of Year 6 or 8 have moved through the school from the pre-preparatory department.
- The principal is also the proprietor of the school. There have been several changes in the structure of the senior leadership team in the course of the current academic year. These followed the appointment in September 2013 of a headteacher to lead the preparatory school and the subsequent resignation of this headteacher in January 2014. The head of the preparatory school has been in post since September 2003.
- The curriculum includes all the National Curriculum subjects, with the addition of French that is taught from Reception onwards, Latin taught in Years 5 to 8, philosophy taught in Years 4 to 6, and Greek offered as an option in Years 7 and 8. The curriculum is designed to prepare pupils for the entry examinations to selective secondary schools by the end of Year 6 or Year 8.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the current exceptionally high standards of pupils' achievement by implementing the plans to:
 - further develop the skills of the pre-preparatory and preparatory coordinators, heads of department and pastoral leaders to help them check on the quality of teaching, learning and pastoral care with even more rigour
 - strengthen the links between the pre-preparatory and preparatory departments to share the best practice that exists in teaching and in checking activities.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils achieve exceptionally well and this has been the case year on year. This is the result of outstanding teaching and a remarkably broad, balanced and rich curriculum that supports pupils' personal development extremely well. Pupils perform very highly owing to a prevailing happy, warm and relaxed learning atmosphere; this enables them to flourish without being unduly stressed by the pressure of examinations.
- Pupils enter Reception with skills that are mostly in line with age-related expectations. They make at least good progress in relation to their starting points from Reception to Year 2.
- Progress is more rapid between Years 3 and 8, as the proportion of outstanding teaching increases and pupils benefit from an increasing proportion of specialist teaching.
- Achievement is outstanding because pupils make exceptional progress not only in reading, writing, mathematics and science, but also in most subjects of the curriculum, particularly in Latin, art, design and technology (DT), music, information and communication technology (ICT) and sports.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above national average by the end of the pre-preparatory school and well above by the end of the preparatory school. By the end of Reception, children achieve a good level of development and many of them show the competencies expected of Year 1 pupils in reading, writing and numeracy.
- School records and inspection findings show that there are no significant differences in the rates of progress of different groups including boys and girls, and pupils with the highest and lowest starting points.
- Pupils who have special educational needs, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, make at least good progress and many make outstanding progress, as a result of the strong provision which the school makes for them. Very effective systems ensure that these pupils' needs are identified early. Barriers to learning are overcome with the support of well-trained staff and specialist agencies.
- Pupils who are learning English as an additional language or are bilingual also make outstanding progress over time. This is founded on the emphasis placed on teaching speaking, reading and writing skills.
- Pupils are prepared extremely well for the next stage of their education through a wide-ranging programme that includes preparation for interviews and personal presentation of an interesting topic and abstract concepts.
- In the last few years, all pupils have passed the 11-Plus and 13-Plus examinations and nearly all gained entry to the secondary school of their first choice. School records show that, over time, Year 8 pupils have scored exceptionally highly in the 13-Plus examinations, particularly in science, mathematics, Latin, English and history, and they have gained entry to top-ranking schools. Pupils who are the most able academically or who are gifted musicians regularly gain scholarships, bursaries and commendations.

Quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is typically never less than good and often outstanding and so it enables pupils to achieve extremely well in most subjects. Productive use of time results in pupils covering the curriculum thoroughly and developing very good knowledge and skills year-on-year. Homework builds on pupils' knowledge and helps them to extend their skills.
- Teachers expect their pupils to achieve highly and to behave very well and this produces very positive results. They know their pupils well and respond to their needs promptly during lessons. For example, they ask them questions to test their understanding or deepen their knowledge, or they give additional explanations where pupils show hesitancy or misconceptions.

- Teachers often lead very effective interactive sessions in which pupils are encouraged to contribute their views, solve problems and support or challenge each other. Teachers' good to excellent subject knowledge enables them to impart new knowledge with great confidence, and often with passion, which motivates pupils highly.
- In Reception, teachers plan a mix of activities that gives pupils sufficient experiences of initiating their own learning as well as contributing to the learning of a group under the direction of an adult. Highly skilled teaching assistants support pupils' learning very effectively and contribute to assessing their progress towards the expected goals.
- From Reception onwards, the teaching of reading skills is systematic and very effective. This results in pupils being able to read a wide range of texts and achieving a high level of comprehension. Teachers build on pupils' reading and speaking skills very effectively to develop their writing and, for example, pupils write at length by the end of Year 2.
- The teaching of mathematical skills is very strong throughout the school and pupils routinely apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in geography, science, design and technology and information and communication technology. In 2013, 55 pupils gained top awards in the national junior mathematics challenge.
- Teachers' assessments are accurate and frequent enough to monitor pupils' progress closely. Teachers use the information from these assessments very successfully to decide on the most effective way to support and extend pupils' learning. Pupils have a clear picture of what to do to improve their work because of helpful verbal feedback, high quality marking and being set personal learning targets. In the preparatory department, pupils are routinely involved deeply in the assessment of their learning in most subjects, through self- and peer-assessment.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning are reflected in their high level of response in class and in their ability to work productively on their own, in pairs or in groups. Pupils concentrate on their work and are eager to achieve. The overwhelming majority take pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils love their school and attendance is very high.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding throughout the school in and out of lessons. There has been no need to apply serious sanctions in the last few years. Through very strong pastoral care, pupils develop high levels of self-discipline and self-control and excellent awareness of others' needs. Consequently, learning occurs in a calm and purposeful atmosphere and pupils enjoy harmonious relationships with others.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding and parents, carers, staff and pupils have full confidence in the school's ability to provide a safe environment. Instances of bullying are very rare. Safety education is thorough. Pupils learn about all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying. They also learn how to keep safe in the community, near water and roads.
- Pupils feel that teachers treat them fairly and they appreciate the well-structured reward system. Systems to promote equality of opportunity and ensure there is no discrimination are robust. The curriculum and enrichment activities provide every pupil with the opportunity to find something at which they can excel. This includes academic subjects, sports, music, dance or drama, as well as developing teamwork and leadership skills.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is underpinned by an exceptionally broad curriculum. This is enriched by an extensive after-school programme of 50 clubs and a wide range of day and residential educational visits. Philosophy and religious studies enhance pupils' spiritual and moral development, and their conceptual thinking, through a focus on ethics, moral and social responsibility and respect for the wide range of beliefs and cultures. Pupils are also taught to present views in a balanced way. Participation in drama productions enhances pupils' self-confidence and communication skills.
- Through personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), pupils learn to challenge stereotypes and develop a strong commitment to healthy lifestyles. Pupils contribute to school

life and successfully practise democracy through the elected pupil council and numerous roles of responsibility. They contribute to the wider community through an exceptional range of activities that include supporting a local special school and a village in Africa.

Leadership and management

are outstanding

- The leadership of the principal, who is also the proprietor, is outstanding. Swift and decisive action has ensured that recent changes in the leadership and management of the school have not affected pupils' achievement adversely.
- The proprietor knows the school extremely well and provides the senior leaders with the right mix of support and challenge to inspire them to pursue excellence. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved from good to outstanding since the last inspection and pupils achieve exceptionally well in most subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Due to outstanding management all standards for independent schools and statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework are met fully. Safeguarding arrangements are robust, safety checks are thorough and staff's work to keep pupils safe is supported by a strong commitment to training.
- As principal the proprietor sees that all staff share the same ambitious vision and enact the aims of the school. Pupils thrive in a consistently caring and supportive ethos and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding as a result of strong pastoral care.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It is planned well and monitored very effectively throughout the school. Its main strengths are specialist teaching, PSHCE and enrichment programmes. These support pupils' all-round personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Pupils receive very effective careers advice.
- The leadership of teaching is very strong throughout the school, and the heads of department lead by example. The feedback which senior leaders give to teachers is most effective where it focuses sharply on the quality of learning rather than on the quality of teaching. There are appropriate arrangements for the appraisal of all staff. A wide-ranging training programme helps teachers and teaching assistants to develop their skills and most staff are satisfied with the training they receive.
- The school evaluates the effectiveness of its provision and of pupils' outcomes accurately. It has streamlined the leadership and management structure of the school to further increase the team's effectiveness.
- The right priorities have been identified for further improvement. One is to further develop the skills of the pre-preparatory and preparatory coordinators, heads of department and pastoral leaders to help them check on the quality of teaching, learning and pastoral care with even more rigour. The other is to strengthen the links between the pre-preparatory and preparatory departments to share the best practice that exists in teaching and in the leadership of teaching.
- Strong partnerships with parents, carers and specialist agencies ensure that pupils' educational and welfare needs are met very effectively, including of those of pupils who have specific learning difficulties or disabilities. Most parents and carers are delighted with all aspects of the school's work and would recommend this school to others.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	
Grade 1	Outstanding	
Grade 2	Good	
Grade 3	Requires improvement	
Grade 4	Inadequate	

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number 131165
Inspection number 443474
DfE registration number 205/6390

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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 Day pre-preparatory and preparatory school

School status Independent school

Age range of pupils 4–13 years

Gender of pupils Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll 597

Number of part time pupils 0

Proprietor The Fulham Prep School Limited

Principal Mrs Jane Emmett

Date of previous school inspection 4 May 2012

Annual fees (day pupils) £13,950 (pre-prep) to £15,450 (prep)

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