

# School inspection report

10 to 12 October 2023

## **Salcombe Preparatory School**

224–226 Chase Side  
Southgate  
London  
N14 4PL

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders create an environment where pupils feel happy and safe and can learn effectively, with warm and trusting relationships between teachers and pupils. Because of this and the engaging curriculum and teaching, pupils are keen to learn and share their understanding.
2. Senior leaders and governors share a collaborative, effective working relationship. Both have appropriate skills and use these to reflect on and understand well the school's strengths and areas of challenge. They work together assiduously and professionally as part of an ongoing initiative to promote pupil wellbeing in line with the school's aims. In doing so, they ensure that the Standards are met consistently.
3. Leaders and managers promote meticulous and appropriate curriculum planning. They ensure that much of the teaching is of high quality and is engaging for pupils. Pupils progress to a wide range of senior schools suitably prepared.
4. Teachers provide helpful feedback and enable pupils, including those who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to make good or better progress. However, the quality of teaching is not uniform across all subjects and age groups.
5. In the pre-prep, the positive pupil-teacher relationships result in pupils who are happy, confident, play well together and are developing appropriate and sometimes well-developed self-regulation. They make good progress.
6. Leaders and managers have implemented various initiatives to improve behaviour at the prep school. This has led to improved pupil behaviour and therefore contributed to pupils' wellbeing in this stage of the school. However, the behaviour of some older pupils does not always meet leaders' expectations.
7. Pupils contribute to the school and wider communities. Their understanding of the roles and responsibilities of being part of a democracy is developed so that they are prepared for their adult lives. Pupils have a strong understanding of and commitment to respect for others. Older pupils are taught to use their critical faculties as well as their emotions to develop compassion and empathy.

### The extent to which the school meets the Standards:

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met

### Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school so that it is planned, structured and delivered in a way that promotes pupils' engagement and good progress across all subjects
- embed implementation of the behaviour management policy for older pupils so that all pupils behave consistently well and meet the school's high expectations.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders and governors set high academic expectations. Senior leaders monitor teaching to assess whether teaching is well planned, encourages the pupils to behave well and consistently meets the needs of pupils. This is the case for most of the teaching, and most pupils therefore make good progress. However, some teaching is less engaging, leading to some uneven progress. Leaders are implementing a strategy to ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching.
9. Senior leaders work with governors to promote all aspects of pupil wellbeing. They implement initiatives such as sharing wellbeing advice and regular wellbeing updates with parents, tracking pupils' wellbeing, and hosting motivational speakers to talk to pupils. They hold assemblies that focus on developing pupils' knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence and an annual Global Be Well Day for the whole school. This is an ongoing focus for leaders.
10. Leaders and governors understand and have the necessary skills to meet their differing responsibilities and act accordingly. Oversight by governors is informed, thorough, challenging where necessary and supportive.
11. The teachers know the pupils well and support them appropriately, academically and personally. The school is therefore a happy and safe place for pupils, where they thrive, enjoy learning and have high aspirations, in accordance with the school's aims.
12. Leaders focus on promoting respect for all. Teachers model the behaviour they expect of pupils and teach them how to manage their behaviour. Staff support pupils to understand and act to stop or prevent bullying. In personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons and form times, children, including the very youngest, learn how to tell other children to stop behaviour that they do not like, how to report to an adult and not to be afraid to ask for help. Leaders keep detailed logs of incidents of perceived bullying, actions taken in response and outcomes.
13. Leaders take a comprehensive and systematic approach to risk assessment. For example, they identify and minimise the risks from fire and staff frequently walk the site to identify risks, such as during pick-up and drop-off time. Leaders and staff respond to any risks identified. Staff also carry out appropriate risk assessments in advance of school trips. Leaders train staff annually on completing and contributing to risk assessments, and keep risk assessments up-to-date by reviewing them annually.
14. Safeguarding is a high priority for all staff members, leaders and governors. They are well trained and work together collaboratively and professionally, with a secure understanding of safeguarding, including any contextual safeguarding risks for pupils. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to protect and safeguard pupils. They act on any concerns appropriately.
15. Leaders ensure that the school's sites are secure and well maintained. All fire regulations are complied with and fire drills regularly carried out. Although there was a minor error in the fire risk documentation, it was in all other aspects appropriate. This error was immediately rectified by leaders during the inspection. Many members of staff throughout the school have up-to-date training in first aid and there is appropriate accommodation for pupils who are unwell.

16. Leaders provide due information to parents, including on the school website. Leaders provide parents with termly written reports and regular meetings to keep them informed. Full reports in the summer term include information on pupils' progress.
17. Teachers and leaders manage complaints in accordance with the school's policy. They keep records of any complaints appropriately.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance**

All the relevant Standards are met.

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Senior leaders have designed a broad curriculum that includes the development of pupils' creative skills. Pupils enjoy their lessons and speak positively about the different subjects that they study. They engage positively with their learning and make good progress in all curricular areas.
19. Leaders observe lessons and regularly scrutinise books. They intervene to promote good teaching practice where improvement is needed. As a result, most teaching in the school is of high quality, resulting in pupils being absorbed in their tasks. Pupils work well collaboratively and are keen to contribute their thoughts and ideas in the classroom. They are proud of their work and speak enthusiastically about their learning. Most teaching is well planned and uses resources well. Teachers are encouraging and supportive. They set clear expectations and, in most cases, provide a stimulating and aspirational atmosphere. This enables pupils to respond positively to their lessons and make good progress. However, the quality of teaching and provision is not consistent across subjects and years.
20. Teachers provide helpful feedback and marking to pupils across subjects and year groups. It contributes to the good progress that pupils make. Teachers regularly evaluate pupils' performance. They adjust their teaching and the resources used to the needs of pupils who have SEND, enabling them to make good progress.
21. Teachers use their subject knowledge to deliver well planned lessons which include effective questioning and engaging activities. As a result, pupils make rapid progress in their understanding and use of vocabulary, and in their descriptive writing and creative skills. For example, in the pre-prep, pupils in Year 2 write to a high standard about a range of settings for their stories. In engaging, well-paced lessons, teachers challenge senior pupils in the prep school to use a range of sophisticated literary devices in their work. This enriches pupils' writing and stimulates their imagination as they share their ideas with their peers. Pupils in Year 4 learn about the digital alteration of images while developing their public speaking skills as they present on this topic to their peers.
22. In mathematics, effective teaching enables pupils to develop their knowledge and skills. Most pupils work above age-related expectations from Year 3. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed by senior leaders to support the learning of individual pupils in lessons. Teachers provide individual attention to pupils as needed, in some cases offering bespoke teaching programmes to pupils who have SEND as they work alongside their peers. This results in good and, in some cases, rapid progress for these pupils.
23. Leaders ensure that the science curriculum is interesting and engaging for the pupils, with science lessons in the prep school providing opportunities for pupils to learn through experimentation. Teachers enable pupils to use technology appropriately and safely to enhance their learning. Pupils throughout the prep school use school laptop computers in various ways, including to research, create documents and presentations and complete quizzes. For example, pupils use their laptops to research magnets in science and then confidently create presentations about what they have learnt in a style of their choice. During Wellbeing Day, older pupils are taught about which internet games and sites are age-appropriate and how to manage screen time. They discuss these matters with confidence and understanding.

24. In the early years, leaders have carefully designed the curriculum to ensure that activities are engaging and fun so that they impact positively on the learning and development of children. Teachers create a wide range of opportunities that engage children's interest and imagination. These enable children to build their vocabulary and other intellectual, as well as physical and emotional skills. Adults ensure that children's individual needs are catered for through the range of activities on offer, and skilfully encourage children to challenge themselves where appropriate. Children therefore make good progress whilst happily engrossed in their work and play. They are keen to talk about what they are doing, and there is a calm and focused atmosphere.
25. The progress that pupils make in their education prepares them well for transition to senior school.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

All the relevant Standards are met.



## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

26. Leaders and staff prioritise mutual respect and wellbeing for pupils throughout the school. This is reflected in the curriculum, in teaching practice and during break time activities. As a result, pupils enjoy school and feel included.
27. During PSHE lessons, pupils learn about their relationships with others. The relationships curriculum is appropriate, and pupils feel that the PSHE lessons are a safe place to talk. They know that teachers will help them to resolve any problems, and are confident in managing their friendships and any issues that may arise between them and their peers. Consequently, relationships between pupils are typically positive.
28. In physical education (PE) lessons, teachers ensure that pupils develop relevant skills in activities such as running, gymnastics, and various team games including rugby, whilst exercising some choice as to activities they undertake. Pupils therefore enjoy and work hard in these lessons and make good progress. Leaders and teachers provide a number of extra-curricular activities for pupils that are appropriate to their needs. These include dodgeball, hockey, football, brick construction, puzzle-making, drawing for fun, board games and, in the pre-prep, street dance. Pupils participate enthusiastically in these activities, developing their physical and social skills, as well as their self-confidence.
29. Teachers set clear boundaries and expectations with regard to behaviour in lessons, which creates a focused learning environment. Pupils' behaviour in most lessons is therefore appropriate. They understand the importance of positive behaviour, the school's expectations and what will happen if they misbehave.
30. Leaders have introduced changes to policy and strategies to improve the experience of pupils in the prep school at lunch time. These include a reduction in the number of year groups on the playground at any one time in order to alleviate congestion. Leaders have also introduced opportunities for pupils to engage in positive behaviour by playing games at lunchtime, some of which are led by teachers and some by pupils themselves. The variety of physical activities and games in which pupils now regularly participate supports their physical and mental health. Pupils' behaviour has improved. Leaders are further developing and embedding their initiatives to improve the behaviour of some older pupils who become disengaged towards the end of their time at the school.
31. Pupils understand the long- and short-term negative impacts of bullying because leaders and staff ensure that pupils know about the different sorts of bullying. Older pupils are equipped with a range of strategies to deal with it. Pupils understand that bullying does sometimes occur, but know that when it does, teachers sort it out quickly and effectively. Senior leaders maintain and review behaviour and bullying records to check for any trends or patterns.
32. In PSHE lessons, pupils learn about the importance of eating a balanced diet, exercise and how to care for their bodies. They engage in these lessons with interest and curiosity. This engagement is complemented at lunchtimes by duty staff, who encourage pupils to try foods that are new to them. Staff encourage pupils to take balanced meals.
33. Leaders, overseen by the governing body, ensure that health and safety policies are up-to-date and procedures secure, that admission and attendance registers are accurate and that pupils are

appropriately supervised. Staff administer first aid appropriately and records are well kept. Leaders focus on identifying and mitigating risks and pupils feel safe on the school sites. They are confident that their physical health is supported by teachers and they know what to do if they are injured or feel unwell.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

All the relevant Standards are met.

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

34. Through their oversight of the curriculum, leaders ensure that pupils are taught about world religions, including the commonalities between them. For example, in a prep school assembly, pupils discussed and shared how harvest festival is celebrated in different faiths and religions. Teachers and leaders promote understanding of and celebrate with the pupils a range of faiths and cultures. In this way pupils develop their appreciation and respect for their own and for others' cultures and faiths. In the pre-prep, pupils are keen to share their understanding, recounting with enthusiasm what they have already learnt in religious education (RE) lessons and what they are looking forward to learning. Older pupils in the prep school enjoy increasing their understanding of their own religion in RE lessons.
35. Senior leaders have structured the curriculum so that pupils critically consider their rights and responsibilities. In the pre-prep, teachers give children structured opportunities to consider how they can contribute positively to their class and to accept responsibility for their behaviour. They model respectful behaviour. The children accordingly learn how to treat other people with respect.
36. In the prep school, history and PSHE lessons cover different aspects of democracy. In English lessons for older pupils, teachers thoughtfully choose literary texts and poetry to draw out themes including inclusion and fundamental values. Senior leaders, who are passionate about developing pupils' moral knowledge and understanding, have included philosophy in the curriculum for older pupils. For example, pupils debate whether under a fictional government, scientists should be able to add a harmless substance to water that stops people feeling anger. Pupils learn through these lessons about human rights, compassion and how to think critically.
37. Leaders offer all older pupils the opportunity to take on responsibilities and duties, for example as prefects, wellbeing ambassadors and charity captains. Leaders also encourage pupils to take part in elections for the school council, on which each form in the prep and pre-prep school has a representative. Consequently, pupils understand the democratic nature of these processes and that they will grow up participating in and contributing to society in various roles, including by voting. Older pupils understand and explain clearly the importance of respect and the rule of law in British society.
38. Leaders and teachers develop pupils' economic understanding through the mathematics curriculum. By Year 4, pupils are using their mathematical skills to solve problems involving money. Older pupils continue to develop these skills, and in Year 6 pupils complete a money sense programme, applying their maths to budgeting and understanding receipts, interest rates and the stock market.
39. Teachers encourage and enable pupils to contribute positively to the lives of others, for example, raising money for a number of charities, bringing food in at the harvest festival to donate to those in need in the local community, creating toy boxes for local Ukrainian refugee children and fundraising for Turkey following earthquakes there.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

All the relevant Standards are met.

## Safeguarding

40. Leaders, teachers and governors have created a robust, coherent, whole-school approach to safeguarding, resulting in a culture in which pupils feel safe at school. Governors utilise their own training to rigorously oversee all aspects of safeguarding. Leaders and governors together ensure that policies relating to safeguarding are appropriate, kept up-to-date and implemented effectively. There are regular safeguarding reviews to which senior leaders respond suitably. Leaders manage and record behavioural incidents with safeguarding implications appropriately. They take immediate action in response to incidents and use well-established processes to support pupils on an ongoing basis, where necessary.
41. Safer recruitment checks are carried out as required and appropriately recorded on the single central record of appointments, which is regularly reviewed by the chair of governors.
42. The safeguarding leads understand and fulfil their responsibilities and record-keeping is effective and detailed. The safeguarding team understand the Prevent strategy well and feel passionate about its importance in identifying and dealing with extremism and radicalisation.
43. Senior leaders have created a school culture in which pupils understand who they can go to if they are worried about anything. The trusting relationships between staff and pupils facilitate pupils' confidence that staff will deal suitably with any concerns that they raise.
44. Because of the regular, high-quality training that leaders ensure all staff undergo, staff have a thorough knowledge of their staff code of conduct, understand statutory guidance on safeguarding and radicalisation and appreciate that safeguarding is a whole-school matter. They feel confident in their ability to act appropriately to contribute to the safeguarding of pupils, and to respond appropriately to any safeguarding concerns. They understand contextual risk and that serious safeguarding issues can arise in any school. They know how to whistle-blow and would be confident to do so, if necessary.
45. Through the curriculum, leaders provide for pupils to be taught about the importance of staying safe online. For example, in a Year 4 computing lesson, the teacher explained how to identify fake photos, and Year 5 pupils understand not to provide personal details online and are starting to learn how to avoid online scams. Consequently, pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe online. Leaders and governors ensure that there is effective filtering and monitoring of devices and network usage.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

All the relevant Standards are met.

## School details

<b>School</b>	Salcombe Preparatory School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	308/6055
<b>Address</b>	224–226 Chase Side Southgate London N14 4PL
<b>Website</b>	salcombeprep.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cognita Schools Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Jeremy Phelan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Nicola Sands
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	238
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5-6 June 2019

## Information about the school

46. Salcombe Preparatory School is a co-educational, non-selective day school. It is situated on two sites, approximately one mile apart, in Southgate, North London. Both sites are in residential areas: Chase Side for the Prep School for children aged 7 to 11, and Green Road for the Pre-Prep for children aged 3 to 7.
47. The school was founded in 1916. The head has been in post since September 2021, when the senior leadership team was restructured. The school has been part of the Cognita Schools Group since 2004.
48. There are 47 children in the early years. They are taught in dedicated classrooms and play areas on the Green Road site.
49. The school has identified 20 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Four pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
50. English is an additional language for two pupils.
51. The school states that its aims are to inspire a love of learning in all pupils through providing an excellent education and meaningful engagement in a range of activities and opportunities that enable the children to be happy, thrive and feel prepared in an ever-changing world.

## Inspection details

**Inspection dates**                      10 to 12 October 2023

52. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.
53. Inspection activities included:
- joint teaching and learning walks at both sites, with school leaders, including those with responsibility for pupils with SEND and safeguarding
  - observations of teaching and learning
  - observations of extra-curricular activities
  - discussions with leaders, teachers and support staff
  - discussions with pupils about what it is like to be a pupil at the school
  - discussions with pupils about their work
  - discussions with subject leaders about work and pupil progress
  - observations at break and lunch times
  - attendance at an assembly
  - discussion with the Chair of Governors
  - health and safety tour
  - scrutiny of records and documentation provided by the school
54. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

### How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net).

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