

# SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

*Independent professional inspection of schools belonging to the Cognita Group which are not members of the Independent Schools Council and its constituent associations*

## INSPECTION REPORT

**INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO SECTION 162A  
OF THE EDUCATION ACT 2002**

<b>Name of school:</b>	Downsend School Pre-Prep Ashtead
<b>DfE number:</b>	936/6548
<b>Inspection team:</b>	<b>Reporting Inspector:</b> Dr Martin Bradley  <b>Supporting Inspector:</b> Mrs Anne McConway
<b>Date of inspection:</b>	20 November 2014

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## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Downsend School Pre-Prep Ashtead

Address of school: 22 Oakfield Road,  
Ashtead,  
Surrey, KT21 2RE

Telephone number: 01372 385439

Email address: ashteadpre-prep@downsend.co.uk

Proprietor: Cognita Group of Schools

Name of the Headteacher: Mrs K Barrett

DfE number: 936/6548

Type of school: Independent school belonging to the  
Cognita group

Age range of pupils and students: 2 to 6

Gender of pupils: Male and female

Total number on roll: 82  
(Full-time: 43)  
(Part-time: 39)

Number of pupils with statements of  
special educational need: Boys: 0                      Girls: 0

Annual fees: £2,610 to £9,705

Type of inspection: Section 162A of the Education Act 2002

Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector: Dr Martin Bradley  
Supporting Inspector: Mrs Anne McConway

Date of inspection: 20 November 2014

## **SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

### **Purpose and scope of the inspection:**

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service in accordance with Section 162(A) (1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by the School Inspection Service and agreed with the Department for Education (DfE). It was conducted by independent professional inspectors who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations.

### **Information about the school:**

Downsend School Pre-Prep Ashted is one of three co-educational pre-preparatory schools for children aged two to six years attached to Downsend Preparatory School. It has been owned by Cognita Schools since 2004. Some specialist staff are shared with the other pre-preparatory schools in the group. The school is open from 8.30 am to 3.30 pm and has before-school provision from 8.00 am and after-school provision up to 5.30 pm. It consists of First Steps, Rising Reception, Reception and Year 1 classes. The school is housed in a former residential property and has a large well-resourced garden. It aims to 'present each child with opportunities to achieve their potential in all areas of the curriculum, preparing them for a happy and successful progression towards the next stage of their education'. The present report refers to the classes for three to six year olds.

### **Summary of main findings:**

This is an outstanding school. The oldest pupils' attainment is above the local average. Progress is outstanding. The pupils develop excellent reading and numeracy skills. Speaking skills are outstanding and the pupils confidently discuss their work. The quality of the curriculum is particularly good. Teaching is also outstanding, especially in the Reception classes. Throughout the school assessment is of a very high standard. It informs planning which is thorough. Reports to parents are outstanding and the school's well-chosen resources support learning very effectively. Outdoor play is well supervised, but the purpose of activities, including supporting shared and cooperative experiences, is less well developed.

### **What the school does well:**

- The pupil's attainment by the end of the oldest classes is above local averages and their progress is outstanding;
- the pupils acquire excellent reading and numeracy skills;
- teaching, especially in the Reception classes, is outstanding;

- the pupils communicate well and are very confident when initiating conversations and commenting on their work;
- assessment is outstanding; it is frequent, rigorous and consistent throughout the school. It informs thorough planning and supports the effective tracking of pupils' learning and development;
- reports to parents are outstanding and they have good opportunities to contribute to the pupils' learning journey records; and
- the resources are of high quality and support imaginative learning.

**What the school must do to comply with the regulations:**

- The school fully meets the regulatory requirements.

**What the school must do to comply with the Equality Act 2010**

- The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

**Next Steps**

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

- Develop outdoor play so that it supports shared and cooperative learning more effectively, as is indicated in the school's action plan.

## **SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION**

### **PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school**

#### **The quality of the curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is particularly good. It is broad and carefully planned to meet the needs of the full range of the pupils. It is enhanced by outings, such as to the local greengrocer, a farm, and theatre trips, and by visitors to the school, including from a toy museum, the community police, and a story teller. There are specialist teachers for French, ball skills, drama, music, dance and yoganory. Reception and Year 1 classes have specialist swimming teaching at the Preparatory School. From the youngest classes, the pupils take books home to share with their parents, and in Year 1 there is an appropriate homework timetable of activities. The high quality resources support the wide curriculum and encourage active learning and involvement, stimulating the pupils' interest and imagination. The provision enables the pupils to acquire excellent skills in speaking, reading, numeracy and independent working. Personal, social and health education reflects the ethos of the school. There are strong links with the Year 2 curriculum in Downsend Preparatory School.

#### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

The quality of teaching, especially in the Reception classes, and on-going assessment throughout the school is outstanding. Individual targets are well used to support personal, social, and emotional development in the Rising Reception and Reception classes. Next steps for future learning provide effective support for work in other areas of the curriculum. Overall, pupils' progress is outstanding. Pupils are encouraged to think and learn for themselves through the use of open-ended questions. Teaching is well-targeted to the needs and prior attainment of individual pupils. This is reflected in the rigorous assessments which, in turn, inform planning. Pupils increase their understanding and are able to communicate their feelings and thoughts very effectively. Overall attainment is above local averages. Many lessons are very well related to developing skills which are of use outside school and for the future, such as shopping and sports skills, including short tennis where a good understanding of safety issues supports good ball skills. Provision for children with special educational needs is particularly good, and the individualised planning enables their needs to be met through well matched work and targeted adult support where necessary.

#### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

### **PART 2 - The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with some outstanding aspects. The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths, beliefs and cultural traditions. Assemblies celebrate a wide range of festivals, and mutual respect is fostered through the active promotion of sharing, listening to others, ways of dealing with conflict and the promotion of good behaviour. The

pupils develop significant confidence along with self-esteem and self-knowledge. They respect the school rules and there are clear expectations regarding behaviour which is at least good and often outstanding. Social development is often outstandingly well promoted, with children from the youngest classes being encouraged to play and work together, sharing equipment and listening carefully to the views and ideas of others. The staff provide excellent role models for this work.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

**PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good. They have full regard to the Secretary of State's guidance. There is a written policy for good behaviour which is implemented effectively, as is the anti-bullying strategy. Health and safety legislation is also implemented appropriately and fire regulations are met. There is a good written policy on first aid. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

**PART 4 - Compliance with the regulatory requirements**

The Single Central Register for the school, and for the other two pre-preparatory schools linked to Downsended Preparatory School, is kept centrally. The Register is in order and meets all the requirements.

The regulatory requirements are fully met.

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of schools belonging to the Cognita group. Further copies of the report are available from the School Inspection Service website: [www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk](http://www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk)