

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

Name of school:	Downsend School Pre-Prep Epsom
DfE number:	936/6199
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Dr Martin Bradley Supporting Inspector: Mrs Anne McConway
Date of inspection:	18 November 2014

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Downsend School Pre-Prep Epsom

Address of school: 6 Norman Avenue,
Epsom,
Surrey, KT17 3AB

Telephone number: 01372 385438

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

Proprietor: Cognita Group of Schools

Name of the Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Bradley

DfE number: 936/6199

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: (Full-time) Boys: 16 Girls: 8
(Part-time) Boys: 21 Girls: 15

Number of children under 5 Boys: 26 Girls: 19

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: 18 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 Pre-Prep Epsom is one of three co-educational pre-preparatory schools for children aged from 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 8.55 am to 3.30 pm and has before-school provision from 7.45 am and after-school provision up to 6.00 pm. It consists of First and Second Steps nurseries, Reception and Year 1 classes. The school is housed in a former residential property and has extensive and attractive grounds. It aims 'to develop independent, confident and well-mannered children who are proud of their achievements'. The present report refers to the classes for three to six year olds.

Summary of main findings:

The overall quality of education is outstanding, as is the quality of teaching, especially in the older classes. The curriculum is wide and rich, and teachers have high expectations of the pupils. This is reflected in their outstanding progress and confidence in their learning. Recent improvements, including good use of questioning and encouraging longer, more complex answers, have extended the pupils' attainment. Also developments in outdoor learning are in hand and the school is aware of the need to develop the full range of its curriculum outdoors as well as indoors.

What the school does well:

- The overall quality of education is outstanding. It is particularly effective in the Reception and Year 1 classes;
- the quality of teaching in Reception and Year 1 is outstanding, especially in mathematics and English;
- the curriculum is wide, rich and varied. It makes particularly good use of specialist teachers;
- teachers have high expectations for the children's attainment. By building on previous learning they enable the pupils to make outstanding progress; and
- the pupils enjoy coming to school and are confident, questioning learners.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

- Provide accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet.

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:

- Continue to develop provision for outdoor learning so that this reflects the full range of the curriculum;
- review the afternoon activity sessions to provide increased challenges to the pupils and to enable woodland activities to be used more regularly as part of the daily curriculum; and
- review aspects of the accommodation including provision of staff toilets, overhead cables between the former houses, and indoor provision to accommodate whole school activities.

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 outstanding. It is wide, rich and varied and provides an excellent range of learning experiences. These include the use of specialist teachers for music, drama, dance, French and sport. Reception and Year 1 classes have specialist swimming teaching at the Prep School. There is a strong focus on English and mathematics which enables the pupils to exceed local standards. The recent development of a woodland nature school usefully extends the curriculum. As yet, planning for this and other outdoor learning does not fully reflect the wide range of the indoor curriculum. There is a good range of after-school clubs for Reception and Year 1 pupils.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching overall is outstanding. It is particularly strong in the Reception and Year 1 classes, with work in phonics and writing being very effective. In the older classes the teachers make very productive use of time, and tasks are challenging and well matched to the needs of the pupils. Throughout the school staff are enthusiastic; they know their subjects thoroughly, as well as having good knowledge of how the pupils learn and how to promote their progress. In the best lessons the teachers develop the pupils' learning very effectively by providing opportunities for extended responses, using complex language. The recently appointed headteacher has begun to review practices and to monitor the quality of teaching and planning. She has a clear sense of purpose and direction for the school's work and the staff have responded enthusiastically to her approach. The pupils are actively engaged in lessons through a wide range of high quality resources. These encourage experimentation and exploration. Adult-child relationships are excellent and staff are deployed very effectively. Classroom organisation is particularly good.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

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

The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It reflects the school's broadly Christian ethos within a curriculum which acknowledges other faiths and beliefs. The school has developed a curriculum map to show how it addresses British values, including democracy through its School Council, rules and personal, social and health education programme, as well as considering the rule of law through school rules and assemblies. The wider areas of British values are considered, including respect for individuals and their liberty, as well as tolerance for and understanding of different beliefs, faiths, cultures and lifestyles. A visitor to a Year 1 class spoke about Braille and read the pupils a story from a Braille text. Buildings in London have been discussed in another theme, including Buckingham Palace, 10 Downing Street and St Paul's cathedral. This is a useful and positive approach which the school continues to define in its policies and practices. The pupils are encouraged to distinguish right from wrong as they

develop increasingly cooperative approaches to play and learning. Different cultural traditions have been celebrated through Christian festivals as well as Diwali and Hanukkah.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Appropriate arrangements are made to safeguard and promote their welfare and the Secretary of State's guidance is carefully considered. Good behaviour is promoted effectively and is well supported by a clear policy, as is the anti-bullying strategy. Fire safety requirements are fully met and other written welfare policies include first aid, pupils' supervision, staff deployment, and sanctions records are well implemented. The admissions and attendance registers are properly maintained. The parents' survey indicated high levels of support for the school. The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 4 - Compliance with the regulatory requirements

The school meets all the regulatory requirements except for those relating to premises and accommodation, where it needs to provide facilities for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which include a washing facility and proximity to a children's toilet. In all other respects, the premises and accommodation are of good quality.

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

The school meets the requirements of the EYFS.

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.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk