

Saint Nicholas School

Old Harlow, Essex



Applicant Information

An overview of Saint Nicholas School

A brief history

Saint Nicholas School was founded in 1939 with a total roll of 7 pupils. By 1977, the pupil roll had increased to 140 and at this time the school moved from its modest premises in Mill Street, Churchate Street, to the current location at Hillingdon House. Today, Saint Nicholas is a thriving independent coeducational day school catering for approximately 390 pupils aged from 2½ to 16.

The school is a registered charity and the Headmaster is in membership of both the Independent Schools Association (ISA) and the Independent Schools Council (ISC).

Location and premises

The school is situated in delightful gardens and grounds which extend to more than 14 acres. Lower, Middle and Upper Schools are each housed in their own area, within close proximity of each other, enabling good access to shared facilities. The school is very well equipped with specialist classrooms, science laboratories, technology areas, ICT rooms, senior and junior libraries. Sports facilities include extensive playing fields, tennis courts, a heated swimming pool and a magnificent sports hall. A theatre was opened in March 2009 and offers a superb facility for the Performing Arts.

Our aims & ethos

Aims & ethos

At the heart of School are happy, confident children with high aspirations, a strong moral compass and a determination to succeed. Saint Nicholas has an enduring reputation for its excellent pastoral care but also for high standards of behaviour. We are committed to developing courteous and caring pupils with a strong sense of right and wrong and a natural respect for those around them.

Inspiring active and curious learners, we encourage all our pupils to engage in a broad range of activity to stretch themselves academically, creatively and physically.

A team of experienced staff teaches a full range of academic subjects and class sizes are kept relatively small, thus ensuring that each pupil has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential. Staff, pupils and parents value highly the undoubted positive ethos of the school and Saint Nicholas is a school which pupils are happy to attend. All members of staff strive to maintain a well-structured, positive environment in which pupils feel secure and are encouraged to do their best at all times.

The school aims to:

- enable pupils to acquire the knowledge, wisdom and self-discipline appropriate for further education, employment and adult life
- ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to develop their intellectual, physical and creative gifts, across a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a range of extra-curricular opportunities at lunchtime and after school
- promote the personal development of pupils, encouraging lively and enquiring minds, respect for themselves and others and a high regard for truth
- promote self confidence, integrity, social responsibility and awareness in pupils
- generate a happy atmosphere and offer support to all members of the school community
- encourage pupils to show respect and active concern for their school surroundings and for the wider environment
- encourage pupils to be aware of the needs of the community beyond the school and to give service
- provide the stability and security of continuous education on one site, spanning the infant, junior and senior age ranges from 2½ -16 years
- provide a stable environment in which every pupil can achieve the highest standards in all aspects of school life in preparation for the challenges of the future.



The staff and leadership structure

Staff

There are over 70 Staff employed at Saint Nicholas comprising 47 teachers, 9 Teaching Assistants and 14 non-teaching administrative, financial and maintenance staff.

Teachers have a generous PPA allowance of approximately 20%. All teachers and TAs, including the SLT, Headmaster and Deputy, share all regular playground and other duties as well as cover for absent colleagues.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT meets on a weekly basis to assist the Headmaster with all aspects of management and leadership of the school. The members of the SLT are responsible to the Headmaster who is responsible to the Governors. The Bursar supports the Head in the day-to-day running of the school and is responsible to the Governors

Headmaster	Mr David Bown
Deputy Head	Miss H Hopkins
Head of Lower School	Miss Lucy Thomas
Assistant Head (Pastoral)	Miss Alicia Castro
Assistant Head (Academic)	Mr Paul Wilson
Deputy Head of Lower School	Miss Lisa Perez



Our school structure

Saint Nicholas School has three sections, Lower, Middle and Upper but the school is very much a cohesive unit. There are two parallel classes in each year, with a maximum of 20 pupils in each class.

Lower School

This consists of EYFS (2½ to 5 year olds) and Years 1 to 5 with two parallel classes in each cohort. There are around 195 pupils in the Lower School section of the school and specialist teaching increases as the children progress through this section.

Middle School

The Middle School encompasses Years 6, 7 and 8 and currently which are divided into two parallel classes in each year. There are currently around 95 pupils in the Middle School. Pupils are taught by specialist teachers in all subjects.

Upper School

The Upper School encompasses Years 9, 10 and 11 which are divided into two parallel classes in each year. There are currently around 95 pupils in the Upper School. Pupils study GCSEs over three years, selecting their options in Year 8, and are set according to ability where appropriate.

House system

All pupils belong to one of four houses and compete in inter-house competitions and gain housepoints for positive achievements and contributions to school life.

Pupils

Pupils are recruited from a wide catchment area encompassing a radius of about 20 miles around Harlow.



Our curriculum

Lower School

EYFS

In the Early Years our aim is to provide your child with a safe, stimulating and caring environment in which to embark on their school life. We have a very enthusiastic and experienced team of staff who are trained specifically in Early Years Education and have a comprehensive understanding of how young children learn.

Years 1 & 2

The balanced curriculum emphasises the acquisition of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, enabling other subjects and topics to be introduced as mastery of these skills develops. All children study the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In addition, all pupils begin to study the foundation subject courses in history, geography, RE, art, music, drama, design technology and PE.

Years 3 to 5

The class teacher retains overall responsibility for the pupils and teaches all of the core and foundation subjects. Throughout the lower school children receive specialist teaching in French, music, drama, and PE/Games. Homework is set on a regular basis, and is given due emphasis at this stage not least because it promotes self-discipline and the ability to study independently. The wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding gained by pupils during these important years provides a necessary foundation for a successful career in the Middle and Upper Schools.

Middle & Upper School

A full range of subjects is taught throughout Years 6 to 11, with a steady progression from a wide curriculum base in the lower years towards more choice and specialisation as pupils approach their GCSE examinations. Pupils are assessed on their progress through regular informal tests and annual school examinations, ultimately sitting the GCSE examination in 10 subjects.

Each subject has its own teaching area with a good range of resources. Small classes allow maximum teaching support for the individual and all subjects are taught by specialist staff.

Pupils throughout the senior section take English (Language and Literature), mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics, French, PSHE, PE and games.

Additional to these subjects and taken by all pupils in Years 7 to 9 are geography, history, RE, art, art 3D, music, drama, ICT, design technology and food technology, with German and Latin for Year 7 pupils and a choice of one of these languages in Year 8.

In addition to the core GCSE subjects, pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 are able to choose three further subjects from a variety of options. The aim of the upper school is to enable all pupils to achieve a range of GCSE qualifications in which quality and breadth are emphasised.



Pastoral care

The supervision, care and welfare of individual pupils are the responsibility of Form Teachers, who register the pupils twice daily and closely monitor their progress.

Pupils of all ages in the school are also grouped vertically in Houses. This arrangement provides the possibility of competition, in matters of work, games and conduct, and allows senior pupils to exercise initiative and responsibility. The four Houses (St Alban, St Christopher, St Francis and St George) meet regularly, and business is conducted by Housemasters and Housemistresses who come from the teaching staff from all levels in the school. House Captains and Vice Captains are selected from the pupils to help organise and coordinate House activities.

High standards of behaviour are encouraged amongst the pupils at all times, within a clear disciplinary framework. Pupil-teacher relationships are based upon mutual respect, clear expectations and consistency. Pupils are actively encouraged to develop an awareness of their responsibilities towards each other as well as towards adults. When necessary, discipline is enforced through detention or loss of privilege. A clear Rewards and Sanctions Policy reinforces high standards of behaviour.

The staff and the Headmaster are always available for parents to discuss any matters or problems associated with school life.

The Friends – our parent association

The Friends are a group of parents who run fun social events for children and parents and they provide superb support for the School. They raise money to provide additional equipment and facilities which will enhance school life for the children. In raising funds they have organised a variety of social events which pupils, parents and staff have always enjoyed.

The Friends organise major events such as the winter and summer Fetes, quiz nights, as well as supporting the school on Open Days and at sports events.



ISI whole school inspection – September 2012

Headline judgements.....

- The quality of pupils' overall achievement and learning is good. The pupils are extremely well educated in line with the school's aims to enable them to achieve of their best. In many areas of their work they achieve high standards.
- The quality of the curriculum is excellent (and) is extremely well suited to the pupils' ages, abilities and needs.
- The excellent range of extra-curricular activities, transformed since the previous inspection, gives all access to sporting, creative and academic pursuits.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. In a significant number of lessons observed across the school, teaching was excellent. Teachers know their pupils well, and the rapport between them adds to the strength of the teaching. The quality of marking and assessment is excellent.
- The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. All pupils are extremely confident and responsible. Pupils' moral awareness is extremely strong. They have a keen sense of right and wrong. They are courteous and considerate. The social awareness of pupils within their school community is excellent. The spirit of teamwork is a vibrant part of the school community, from working together in lessons, to representing the school in sports teams and taking part in drama and musical opportunities. The cultural awareness of the pupils is strong, and tolerance and harmony are part of the school community.
- The quality of the pastoral care of pupils is excellent. The staff provide excellent care and guidance for the pupils.
- The school's arrangements for the pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent. These ensure that the pupils are looked after extremely well in a caring, family environment where they feel happy and secure.
- The quality of governance is excellent. Strong governance, greatly improved since the previous inspection, has ensured that the school is successful in achieving its aims.
- The quality of leadership and management is excellent overall. Leadership and management are extremely effective in ensuring that the school achieves its aims of providing a caring, family environment in which pupils from the EYFS upwards thrive. Strong, yet approachable, visionary leadership provides clear educational direction for the school.
- Links with parents are excellent. The school maintains constructive relationships with parents, implementing an open door policy that was observed in action during the inspection.
- The quality of pupils' reports is excellent. They are highly informative and give parents a clear overview of their children's progress, indicating how they can be helped to improve.



Examination results

GCSE results

	Number of Year 11 pupils	% A* - C	% 5+ A* - C	% 5+ A* - C inc MA & EN	% A* & A
2009	29	87	86	86	35
2010	33	74	82	82	17
2011	27	91	96	89	29
2012	27	85	89	85	21
2013	33	69	67	67	23
2014	31	74	74	71	21
2015	33	87	91	88	30
2016	23	82	83	65	29
2017	28	85	96	93*	25

*Includes English Language or Literature



Enriching our pupils' experiences

Drama

The school has a vigorous and stimulating drama department and the subject is taught by specialist teachers throughout the school. A wide range of productions are presented each year, involving pupils of all ages. For pupils up to Year 9, drama is undertaken during the course of the normal school day, and it is an optional GCSE subject for older pupils. A flourishing senior drama club takes place after school and, on occasions, at weekends, tackling a wide range of challenging material with examinations and stage productions taking place throughout the year. The works of Shakespeare have featured on many occasions, along with more progressive and contemporary work.

Music

Music thrives at all levels in the school. In addition to the usual curriculum time, practices are often undertaken at lunchtime and after school.

Pupils have the opportunity to undertake individual instrumental tuition and also to participate in group ensemble work or to join the choirs. The choirs take part in a number of activities ranging from the traditional Carol Concert at the local church in December to the musical extravaganzas that are staged throughout the junior and senior sections periodically. Recent summer shows have ranged from the tradition of 'Oliver' to the power and emotion of 'The Wizard of Oz'.

Both drama and music provide every opportunity for artistic expression throughout the whole of the school. Such opportunities require a great deal of commitment and team work outside the usual curriculum and in this way pupils develop increasing self-discipline and confidence, as well as the satisfaction and pleasure gained from participating in such performing arts.

Sport

Physical education forms an integral part of the school day at all levels. For younger pupils much emphasis is placed on balance, agility and the development of coordination, both through work undertaken with apparatus in the Sports Hall and in swimming and playing ball games in the grounds.

Formal games are taught from the age of 7 where the extensive range of sporting activity includes soccer, rugby, cross country running, hockey, netball, basketball, athletics, swimming, cricket, tennis and rounders.

In addition to timetabled lessons, further opportunities occur for 7-year-olds and above to participate in sporting activities at lunchtime and after school.

Regular sports fixtures against other schools are arranged for pupils throughout the age ranges. The School is a member of ISA and sporting tournaments throughout East Anglia are arranged during the course of the year. Successes at such regional meetings have led many of our pupils to go on to represent East Anglia in the national finals in such sports as athletics, swimming, triathlon, cross country running and sevens rugby.

Clubs and activities

A wide range of clubs and activities take place both at lunchtime and after school and the majority are free of charge. All teachers are expected to contribute to the extra-curricular programme.

Duke of Edinburgh Award

The Award is introduced in Year 10 and the programme helps pupils develop self-confidence and self-reliance; gain a sense of achievement and a sense of responsibility; discover new skills, interests and talents and develop leadership skills and abilities.

School trips and educational visits

Pupils' experiences in the classroom are further extended by offering them a wide range of educational visits, expeditions and holidays organised throughout the school year. Activities range from local museum and theatre trips to educational cruises and skiing holidays.

A residential camp is organised each autumn term for Year 7 pupils and various scientific and geographical field trips form a regular part of life in the senior section. Parents are always informed of such visits well in advance so that they are able to plan accordingly.

The children benefit enormously from such opportunities, learning to be independent when living away from home, as well as enjoying all the intrinsic advantages and benefits of the expeditions.

Work experience

All Year 10 pupils take part in a week programme of work experience with local businesses and employers. This is a valuable insight in their chosen career interests.

Appointment process and contact information

Start date

Please check details on the advert.

Closing date for applications

Please check details on the advert.

Terms & conditions

Teachers are paid according to the national main professional scale for teachers including post threshold payments.

Saint Nicholas School teachers may contribute to the Teachers' Pension Scheme and the school will contribute the statutory employer's contribution to this scheme if you choose to join. Non-teaching salaries are stated in the relevant job description.

There is a generous fee remission for children of members of staff of up to 50% of the full fees.

Interviews

Normally in the week following the closing date.

School visits

Visits to the school are encouraged. Please contact Mrs Julie Bradley, PA to the Headmaster, on 01279 429910 or heads_pa@saintnicholasschool.net to arrange a visit.

Applications

All applications for teaching posts should be made through the TES.

Conditions of employment

Saint Nicholas School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and other vulnerable groups and expects all staff, parents and volunteers to share this commitment. All staff and volunteers, where appropriate, will be required to complete our safer recruitment checks including qualifications, references, enhanced DBS and barred list, proof of identity, right to work in the UK, overseas, EEA, prohibition and medical checks. New employees will be required to submit a 'by association' declaration.

