Saint Nicholas School

Old Harlow, Essex



General 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, Churchgate Street, to the current location at Hillingdon House. Today, Saint Nicholas is a thriving independent coeducational day school catering for approximately 400 pupils aged from 2½ to 16.

The school is a registered charity and the Headteacher 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 fourteen acres. Pre-school, 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 and theatre. Sports facilities include extensive playing fields, tennis courts, a heated swimming pool and sports hall.

Our aims & ethos

The school aims to:

- provide a safe, happy and secure environment in which our pupils are able to develop academically, physically and creatively across a broad and balanced curriculum;
- challenge our pupils to raise their aspirations and to develop the confidence and resilience to stretch and reach towards their full potential;
- promote active and curious learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding appropriate for learning, employment and adult life;
- promote the personal development of pupils, encouraging resilient, confident and compassionate young people with a strong sense of right and wrong and a natural respect for those around them;
- encourage our pupils to develop an understanding of their social responsibility and a respect for their school surroundings, the local community and the wider environment;
- provide the stability and security of continuous education on one site, spanning the age range from 2½ to 16 years.

Saint Nicholas School has a broadly Christian ethos, whilst actively welcoming children of all faiths and none. Our pupils are taught to respect each other and the community at large and to accept differing views and opinions. We aim to instil the values of compassion, tolerance, courtesy and respect.

ENCOURAGING CONFIDENCE & ASPIRATION

At Saint Nicholas we inspire active and curious learners who stretch themselves in all aspects of school life. Academic success is celebrated alongside personal development and at the heart of our school are happy confident young people with high aspirations, a strong moral compass and a determination to succeed. Our extensive curriculum and extra-curricular activities are designed to ensure that Saint Nicholas pupils are, not just numerate, literate and articulate but also develop the collaborative skills and emotional intelligence which is so importance for their future success.

DEVELOPING THE INDIVIDUAL

We place a major emphasis on the individual, recognising that all children are different, and we value each and every one in their own right. Small classes promote excellent relationships and enable our staff to quickly identify each child's strengths and weaknesses and to get to know the pupils as individuals. Every child has his or her own talents and abilities, and we aim to encourage each one to develop and to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

The staff and leadership structure

STAFF

There are over 80 Staff employed at Saint Nicholas comprising teachers, teaching assistants and non-teaching administrative, financial and maintenance staff. Teachers have a generous PPA allowance of approximately 20%. All teachers and TAs, including the Headteacher and SLT, share 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 Headteacher with all aspects of management and leadership of the school. The members of the SLT are responsible to the Headteacher who is responsible to the Governors. The Bursar supports the Headteacher in the day-to-day running of the school and is responsible to the Governors.

Deputy Head	Mrs Helen Hopkins
Head of Lower School	Mrs Lucy Thomas
Deputy Head of Lower School	Miss Lisa Perez
Assistant Heads (Pastoral)	Mrs Ridley-Warren & Mrs Eleanor Mulinder
Assistant Head (Academic)	Mr Paul Wilson

Our school structure

Located on a single site of fourteen acres, Saint Nicholas is divided into four sections: Pre-school (aged 2½ to 4), Lower School (aged 4 to 9), Middle School (aged 9 to 13) and the Upper School (13-16). Each year group within the school is divided into two parallel classes.

PRE-SCHOOL

From the first day onwards our priority in Little Saints is to ensure that our pupils feel safe and secure. Each child has a 'key person' who is responsible for a small group of children and for developing an excellent partnership with parents. The dedicated outdoor learning spaces are a real strength of our provision and we recognise the importance of these areas and the opportunity they afford to enrich our children's experiences.

LOWER SCHOOL (RECEPTION - YEAR 5)

We have high aspirations for all of our pupils; most of whom work beyond age related expectations and thrive on the breadth we offer across the curriculum. Our excellent Lower School staff are supported by a team of specialist teachers who deliver physical education, music, drama and French to all pupils in the Lower School.

MIDDLE SCHOOL (YEAR 6 – YEAR 8)

Our aim within the Middle School is to provide the very best education across a broad and varied curriculum. Our specialist teachers and enriched curriculum inspire our pupils to embrace challenge at every opportunity. Children explore different subject areas and begin to identify interests and passions which they can continue developing in the Upper School.

UPPER SCHOOL (YEAR 9 – YEAR 11)

With a strong academic ethos, rich curriculum, and excellent pastoral care, the Upper School provides a wonderful learning environment for all its senior pupils. Opportunities within and outside the curriculum are rich and varied and the expectation is that pupils will make full use of all that the school has to offer. GCSE study begins in Year 9, allowing a full three years to prepare for these important examinations.

Our curriculum

LOWER SCHOOL

EYFS

In the Early Years our aim is to provide each child with a safe, stimulating and caring environment in which to embark on their school life. The outstanding pre-school staff have high aspirations for our children, most of whom make excellent progress, and ensure that our high quality education is founded on the individual needs of each child.

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 broad core curriculum in the lower years towards more choice and specialisation as pupils approach their GCSE examinations.

Each subject has its own teaching area with a good range of resources. Small classes promote excellent relationships and allow teachers to provide the appropriate balance of challenge and support for each individual. Pupils attainment and progress is assessed through regular informal tests and examinations.

Pupils throughout the Middle and Upper School 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 and 8 are geography, history, RE, art, art 3D, music, drama, ICT, design technology and food technology, with German, Latin and Spanish 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 routine supervision, care and welfare of individual pupils are the responsibility of Form Teachers under the direction of the Middle / Upper School Assistant Head (Pastoral).

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. A clear Rewards and Sanctions Policy reinforces high standards of behaviour.

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. House Captains are selected from the pupils to help organise and coordinate House activities. The staff and the Headteacher are always available for parents to discuss any matters or problems associated with school life.

School Inspection

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	% 9-4 (A*-C)	% 5+ 9-4 (A* - C)	% 5+ 9-4 (A* - C) Inc. MA & EN	% 9- 7 A* & A
2015	33	87	91	88	30
2016	23	82	83	65	29
2017	28	85	96	93*	25
2018	28	88	96	93*	20

*Includes English Language or Literature

Enriching our pupils' experience

MUSIC & DRAMA

Promoting creativity and developing confidence, music and drama are key components of our curriculum. Throughout the school the emphasis is on active participation and enjoyment, helping pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem as well as an appreciation of the arts as a whole.

Taught by specialists across the school, music and drama can change the way pupils feel, think and act; stimulating personal expression, reflection and creativity. A wide range of productions are presented each year, involving pupils of all ages.

SPORT

We ensure that every pupil in school has the opportunity to participate and excel in a range of sporting activities. Our ethos is one of participation and enjoyment within a context of physical challenge and competition. Sport plays an important role within the personal development of our pupils, promoting team work and selflessness and reinforcing values of determination and fair play.

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

The programme of trips and educational visits is a real strength of the school. Our aim is to provide opportunities and experiences which help to develop rounded and confident young people, who are not afraid of 'having a go' or trying something for the first time. From a trip to the local Post Office, to send a letter to Father Christmas, to trekking through the mountains of Peru these experiences create memories for life.

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.

INTERVIEWS

Usually take place during the week following the deadline.

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.

SCHOOL VISITS

Visits to the school are encouraged. Please contact Mrs Julie Bradley 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.