

Saint Nicholas School

Old Harlow, Essex



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 400 pupils aged from 4 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. Infants, juniors and seniors 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 £1m theatre was opened in March 2009.

Our aims & ethos

Aims & ethos

Our philosophy is based upon a commitment to sound moral principles and a view of education as an all-round preparation for life. Academic work is given strong emphasis and, equally, sound guidance in personal development is seen as an integral part of a good education.

The school's academic record is amongst the best in the country. 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 4-16 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 60 Staff employed at Saint Nicholas comprising 43 teachers, 5 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

Deputy Head

Mr Terry Ayres

Assistant Heads

Assistant Head – Head of Infants

Assistant Head – Head of Juniors

Assistant Head – Head of Seniors

Assistant Head – Director of Studies

Miss Maggie Jones

Mrs Rachael Clements

Mrs Jan Bryant

Mr Neil Lansdowne Jones

Our school structure

Saint Nicholas School has three sections, Infant, Junior and Senior 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.

Infants

This consists of a Foundation Class (4 to 5 year olds) and Years 1 and 2 with two parallel classes in each cohort. There are currently about 90 pupils in the junior section.

Juniors

This comprises Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 with two parallel classes in each year. There are about 130 pupils the junior section of the school and specialist teaching increases as the children progress through this section.

Seniors

The senior pupils currently number around 170 which are usually divided into two parallel classes in each year. A wide range of option subjects are offered at the end of Year 9 and pupils are set according to ability in most core subjects.

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

Infants

The infant section includes Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, covering the age range from 4 to 7 years. 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.

During the infant years, 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, Religious Education, Art, Music, Drama, Design Technology and Physical Education. An early introduction to ICT is also developed to allow pupils to use computers as part of their daily lives. Whilst covering all National Curriculum attainment targets, the school retains its independence in introducing other key curriculum areas that are considered valuable. One such area is that of French, where conversation skills are developed from the age of 5. During these infant years most curriculum areas are taught by class teachers.

Juniors

The junior section spans the age range from 7 to 11 years and includes pupils in Years 3 to 6. During the junior years, increasing use is made of specialist teaching, whereby the pupils leave their class teacher to be taught by specialist staff in specialist rooms. This arrangement brings many advantages to children of this age, who would not normally benefit from such opportunities. Subject areas covered in this way include French, Art, Music, Drama, Design Technology, ICT and PE/Games. The class teacher retains overall responsibility for the pupils and teaches all of the core and foundation subjects.

Timetabled homework is set on a regular basis, the amount varying according to age and subject. Homework

is given due emphasis at this stage because it develops self-discipline and the ability to study independently, both of which attributes are essential for further success. 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 senior section.

Seniors

A full range of subjects is taught throughout Years 7 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, Religious Education, Art, 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 Years 8 and 9.

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



School Developments

The governing body has recently invested about £75k in improving the school's ICT provision. The school has two dedicated ICT suites. The first has 22 networked terminals and is used for the weekly ICT lessons. The second suite is also fully networked and is a bookable resource used by teachers to support teaching and learning for whole-class lessons.

All staff are issued with a laptop for use in their teaching rooms and at home. The governors have embarked on a programme of introducing interactive whiteboards and data projectors in to classrooms and this should be completed by the end of the academic year.

Recent refurbishment of the Design Technology workshop has been completed and the art room has been relocated in allowing space for our third science laboratory.

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.

Responsible behaviour is encouraged amongst the pupils at all times, within a clear disciplinary framework. Pupil-teacher relationships are based upon a sympathetic, yet firm, approach, which we believe to be essential for all children during their formative years. 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.

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.

School inspection

ISI whole school inspection – November 2008

“Saint Nicholas School successfully fulfils its aims and provides a good quality education for its pupils. They are well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that provide a secure foundation for the next stage of their education, training or employment. The quality of teaching in the infant and junior sections is good overall, with some outstanding features in Years 3 to 6, and pupils achieve good standards in the curriculum and across a wide range of activities. In the senior section, satisfactory teaching, combined with hard work and good attitudes to learning, enable pupils to achieve results above the national average in a broad range of GCSE subjects. With few exceptions, pupils are well behaved, they show respect for others, they are friendly, polite and well-mannered. Pupils are well cared for and their personal development is good.”

Examination results

GCSE results

	Number of Year 11 pupils	% A* - C	% 5+ A* - C	% 5+ A* - C inc MA & EN	% A* & A	Mean passes per pupil
2011	27	91	96	89	29	9.1
2010	33	74	82	82	17	7.5
2009	29	87	86	86	35	9.1
2008	20	95	100	100	38	9.9
2007	20	81	95	90	28	8.2

Year 6 SATs results

	English				Maths				Science			
	Below 3	Level 3	level 4	Level 5	Below 3	Level 3	level 4	Level 5	Below 3	Level 3	level 4	Level 5
2004	0%	9%	85%	6%	0%	3%	59%	38%	0%	3%	30%	67%
2005	0%	6%	77%	17%	0%	17%	39%	44%	0%	9%	33%	58%
2006	0%	7%	32%	61%	0%	7%	32%	61%	0%	0%	26%	74%
2007	0%	3%	58%	39%	0%	14%	53%	33%	0%	0%	42%	58%
2008	0%	3%	42%	55%	0%	11%	36%	50%	0%	0%	28%	72%
2009	0%	3%	66%	31%	0%	5%	49%	46%	0%	0%	34%	66%
2010	0%	3%	65%	33%	0%	5%	49%	46%	0%	3%	36%	62%
2011	0%	8%	45%	48%	0%	0%	63%	38%	0%	0%	25%	75%

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 modern work. Variety is the spice of life in the senior drama club!

Music

Music thrives and abounds 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 have the opportunity to participate in group ensemble work or to join the junior or senior 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 at various times. Recent summer shows have ranged from the tradition of 'Oliver' to the power and emotion of 'Jesus Christ Superstar'.

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. During the infant years 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 in the junior and senior sections, 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 junior and senior sections. Fixtures are arranged locally as well as against other independent schools, especially those in membership of the Independent Schools Association. In this respect, Championship meetings are attended throughout East Anglia 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, 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 9 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 week's residential camp is organised each autumn term for Year 6 pupils and various scientific and geographical field trips form a regular part of life in the senior section. Year 5 pupils take part in a residential trip to France. 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.

Salary

The school uses national pay scales for teachers including post-threshold payments where applicable. Non-teaching salaries are stated in the relevant job description.

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

For teaching posts our usual recruitment process is through the TES hirewire website. The link to our school's microsite is https://www.hirewire.co.uk/SaintNicholasSchool/CM170NJ/MS_Index.aspx

You will need to create your own user name and password the first time you log in.

For posts not advertised through hirewire please send a letter of application together with your completed application form. An electronic version of the form is available via the school's website at <http://www.saintnicholasschool.net/vacancies.html>. Completed applications should be forwarded to the Headmaster by the closing date. Please label envelopes 'Confidential application' and forward to:

The Headmaster
Saint Nicholas School
Hobbs Cross Road
Old Harlow
Essex CM17 0NJ

Conditions of employment

The successful candidate will be required to satisfy the school of his/her physical fitness before the appointment is confirmed. Saint Nicholas School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to have this commitment. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Criminal Records Bureau.

