

Denby Grange School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Situated in a semi-rural setting, between Wakefield and Huddersfield, Denby Grange is a small day school for pupils aged from 11 to 17 years who have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some have additional mental health needs. It opened in 2000 and was previously inspected in May 2009. It is registered for up to 36 pupils and there are currently 27 pupils aged 11 to 17 years attending the school; 23 are boys and four are girls. One pupil is above compulsory school age. There are 26 pupils with a statement of special educational needs and six are looked after in care placements. Pupils are placed at the school by a number of local authorities. They have normally been excluded from a previous school or have persistently not attended. The school is run by the Keys Care Group.

The school aims to provide a 'quality education for even the most challenging pupils' by providing a positive, supportive learning environment where pupils are encouraged to achieve.

Evaluation of the school

Denby Grange School successfully meets its aims and provides its pupils with a good quality of education. The school has improved since the last inspection. Strengths have been consolidated and there have been improvements to the teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics. The good curriculum coupled with good teaching, underpinned by excellent relationships, ensures that pupils' personal and academic skills are effectively developed. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school meets all of the regulations for independent schools. Safeguarding meets requirements and the arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good.

Quality of education

The good curriculum is based on national guidance and covers all of the required areas of study. A clear focus on developing the basic skills of English and mathematics is helping the majority of pupils to make at least good progress in these areas. Long-, medium- and short-term planning is detailed and often links to external

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

examination syllabi. Planning for pupils with a statement of special educational needs, particularly related to modifying their behaviour, is good. All have detailed individual education plans, which are regularly updated and link to daily lesson plans. A clear improvement since the last inspection is the increased focus on teaching basic mathematics and English skills, particularly reading. This is important as many pupils have weaker skills in these areas. Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) lessons make a particularly strong contribution to pupils' personal development by tackling issues that are directly relevant to them. For example, in one good lesson pupils learned about the dangers of sexually transmitted infections and made sensible observations about the risks that some people take. Daily assemblies make a positive contribution to the curriculum by, for example, tackling topical issues such as racism in football and the killing of a traveller. However, opportunities across the curriculum to teach pupils more formally about a range of world religions are underdeveloped.

Good use is made of educational visits related to curriculum topics such as a visit to a sculpture park when studying the work of a particular artist. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop employability skills through a well-structured programme of vocational training, for example, in developing woodworking and food technology skills. Careers education is a strength and pupils in their final year are, where appropriate, offered work experience in cafes, supermarkets or a local garage.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Consequently, pupils across the school make good progress from their starting points. Excellent relationships between pupils and their teachers and support staff create a positive atmosphere for learning. Staff are adept at using humour effectively to engage and motivate pupils and use praise well to reinforce pupils' good behaviour and achievement. Teachers know pupils very well and use what they know about each pupil to plan activities that engage and interest pupils. The most successful lessons involve pupils undertaking a series of short practical tasks. For example, in a food technology lesson pupils had to weigh ingredients, record, combine ingredients, evaluate their work and then move on to making the product. Where pupils are less well engaged their learning slows. This tends to be in lessons where there are few practical activities. All pupils receive weekly one-to-one reading support from teachers or teaching assistants. Although this is making a positive contribution to pupils' reading, opportunities are missed to tailor the difficulty of the texts chosen to the individual needs of each pupil and some staff are not familiar with teaching early reading skills. Classroom resources and specialist rooms for design and technology, food technology and art and design are generally good. However, information and communication technology resources are a little dated and under used.

Assessment is well organised so that pupils' levels in each subject are effectively tracked and each pupil now has personalised targets in English and mathematics. Marking has improved since the previous inspection and some provides effective guidance to help pupils to improve future work. However, this is variable and not all marking is as effective. Most pupils join the school with knowledge and skills that are well below the expected level for their age. Work seen in pupils' books and files,

assessment information and discussions with pupils indicate that they are making generally good progress in lessons and over a period of time.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a positive ethos and pupils are treated warmly, respectfully and fairly by staff. As a result, pupils' confidence and self-esteem improve. Spiritual development is promoted effectively. For example, in one assembly pupils were visibly moved when a member of staff spoke about her personal experience of cancer. Staff set high expectations for behaviour and pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong although some still make poor choices. When they do so adults respond quickly to encourage pupils to reflect on their behaviour and its impact on themselves and others. Consequently, behaviour overall is good. Pupils generally show a good level of tolerance and respect towards each other. They are taught adequately about other cultures and discuss issues such as racism. Pupils contribute well when discussing bullying and demonstrate an insight into the feelings of others.

Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities within school, for example, by being a representative on the school council and becoming involved in decision making. Attendance for the majority of pupils has improved over time. However, despite the school's best efforts a few pupils do not attend as regularly as they should and this limits their achievements. Many fundraising activities are carried out by pupils such as car washing, sweeping the car park at a local supermarket and sponsored walks. Pupils enjoy outings and visits to civic buildings, art galleries and museums and these contribute appropriately to their knowledge of services and institutions in England. However, opportunities are missed to widen these experiences to include learning about the judiciary, police and prison service.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for safeguarding students' welfare, health and safety is good. Strengths include the very good staff-to-pupil ratio which ensures that the supervision of pupils is effective and caring staff. Consequently, pupils state that they feel safe and are very well cared for. A high number of staff hold first aid qualifications and all staff have received the required training in child protection at the required level. Risk assessments are thorough so that all educational activities carried out on the site are safe. Planning for off-site visits is good and ensures that pupils are well supervised and all risks are carefully managed. Record keeping indicates that bullying is rare and where incidents do occur they are dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils are given good advice about how to lead a healthy lifestyle. For example in PSHCE lessons they are taught about the dangers associated with smoking. Those pupils who are smokers are encouraged to give up the habit and some pupils state that this is helping them to change their habits. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in physical education at local sports centres. The school complies with the requirements to keep an admission and attendance register and regular fire practices ensure that pupils know what to do in the event of a fire at the site.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All of the required checks are made on staff to ensure that pupils do not encounter unsuitable adults. A single central record is kept up to date and shows clearly that all staff have been subject to an enhanced check by the Criminal Records Bureau before they are allowed to work at the school.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The buildings provide a suitable environment for pupils to learn. The main building is arranged on a single floor with two additional mobile classrooms situated on the school yard. Classrooms are bright and of a good size given the small numbers of pupils in each. Specialist areas include an art room, food technology room and a vocational training centre. The standard of decoration and maintenance varies but is good overall. Outside the school has a hard surfaced yard, complete with a small covered shelter.

Provision of information

The school ensures that parents and carers and others are well informed about the school through a comprehensive school prospectus. The prospectus makes clear that additional information is available on request. Annual reports to parents and carers are detailed and identify each pupil's successes. Improvements since the last inspection include, providing a summary of staff qualifications, the number of complaints received and details of academic achievement. Consequently all regulations are now met.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

Information on how parents and carers can access the school's procedure for handling complaints is contained in the school's prospectus. A detailed complaints policy is available on request. The school's complaints policy and procedures meet the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Improve the arrangements for one-to-one reading support so that the texts and books used are carefully graded and the skills of staff are improved to include the teaching of early reading.
- Improve the formal opportunities for pupils to learn about a range of world religions.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special Day school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties		
Date school opened	2000		
Age range of pupils	11–17		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 23	Girls: 4	Total: 27
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 22	Girls: 4	Total: 26
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 5	Girls: 1	Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,800		
Address of school	Off Stocksmoor Road Midgley Wakefield West Yorkshire WF4 4JG		
Telephone number	01924 830096		
Email address	jennielittleboy@keyschildcare.co.uk		
Headteacher	Jennie Littleboy		
Proprietor	Heather Laffin		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 October 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Denby Grange School, Wakefield, WF4 4JG

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to me and my colleague when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and finding out your views about your school. We found looking at your work, visiting you in your lessons and talking to you and the staff very helpful. We found that your school is providing you with a good education and we would like to share some of our findings with you.

- The teachers and support staff care well for you and have a very good relationship with each of you which helps you to improve your behaviour and attitude to school.
- The curriculum is good and teachers make sure that the work you do helps you to make good progress.
- The teaching is good and the support and help you are given to complete your work is helping you to reach your targets.

We have suggested some things for your headteacher and staff to do to make things even better for you.

- Improve the arrangements for your one-to-one reading support so that the texts and books used are carefully graded and the skills of staff are improved to include the teaching of early reading.
- Provide more opportunities for you to learn about a range of world religions.

I hope that you continue to do your very best in school and wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector