

# Deepdene School

195 New Church Road, Hove, BN3 4ED

## Inspection dates

13–15 March 2013

### Overall effectiveness

|  | Overall effectiveness | Outstanding | 1 |
|--|-----------------------|-------------|---|
| Pupils' achievement                        | Outstanding           | 1           | 1 |
| Pupils' behaviour and personal development | Outstanding           | 1           | 1 |
| Quality of teaching                        | Outstanding           | 1           | 1 |
| Quality of curriculum                      | Outstanding           | 1           | 1 |
| Pupils' welfare, health and safety         | Outstanding           | 1           | 1 |
| Leadership and management                  | Outstanding           | 1           | 1 |

## Summary of key findings

### This school is outstanding because

- All pupils make exceptional progress in their learning because of the outstanding quality of teaching across all year groups. As a result, the attainment of the vast majority of pupils far exceeds national averages.
- Pupils across the school develop outstanding attitudes towards learning. They are highly motivated and participate with enthusiasm in all lessons. This is because teachers know their pupils extremely well and plan an excellent range of lessons which provide consistent interest and challenge to all pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour within school is exemplary. Pupils are kind and courteous to one another and play and work together harmoniously. This results in a very happy, positive and purposeful learning environment.
- Pupils' learning is successfully enhanced through an exceptional curriculum, which is effectively extended through an extensive range of outings and visitors to the school.
- The promotion of pupils' welfare, health and safety is excellent. Staff really care about their pupils and provide extensive support to each pupil and their family. This ensures each pupil feels valued and part of Deepdene School.
- Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The joint proprietors are extremely focused and dedicated and have a clear vision for the school and ensure each pupil achieves exceptionally well. Consequently, both proprietors work tirelessly to provide the very best standards of care and education.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a half-day notice period. Inspectors carried out a range of lesson observations from the Upper Nursery classes to Year 6.
- In total, 12 lessons were observed, covering 5.25 hours of inspection time. This included observing 12 teachers. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and evaluated the quality and implementation the school's policy documents.
- Meetings took place with the proprietors and key staff; parents, carers and groups of pupils.
- Information gathered from Parent View, letters from parents, online surveys and staff questionnaires were used to inform inspection activities.

## Inspection team

Jo Caswell HMI, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Armitage

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Deepdene School is a non-denominational and non-selective school which provides early years provision and education for boys and girls aged from six months to 11 years. The aims of the school are to enable children to become self-motivated learners with enquiring minds and, through their work, to become confident, competent, considerate and compassionate individuals.
- There are currently 214 pupils on roll. Of these, 103 attend part time. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school population reflects the ethnic diversity of the local community. The school does not use alternative provision for any of its pupils.
- The school has registered early years provision for children aged from six months to five years which is owned and managed by the proprietors. The school offers breakfast clubs and after-school care for all pupils and a play scheme operates during school holidays. The registered early years provision was not inspected as part of this inspection and is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.
- The school was last inspected in November 2009.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the school's existing outstanding delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum by further increasing children's continuous access to the outdoor learning environment.
- In order to assist the school in its already successful measures and to ensure that standards do not slip, introduce a system for measuring pupils' rates of progress each year relative to their starting points and to national expectations.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

### Outstanding

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make outstanding progress over time. This judgement is well supported by the school's test results at the end of both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, which show a very high proportion of pupils doing better in both literacy and numeracy than what is expected nationally. This is confirmed by the results of other nationally available tests used by the school. For example, one shows that the spelling of a substantial number of Year 5 and 6 pupils is two years ahead of their age. Scrutiny of pupils' work confirms the test results.

Two key factors account for this success. The first is the outstanding quality of the teaching. One excellent example was the encouragement given to Year 1 pupils in a literacy lesson as they wrote about what happened when they climbed a beanstalk. There was a similar example in numeracy when Year 6 pupils struggled initially with negative numbers but quickly gained confidence. In part this was due to the teacher providing a real situation in the form of a bank statement which quickly went into debt, so the pupils saw the reality of negative numbers in the adult world. The second key factor is the attitudes of pupils and their enthusiasm to learn. There was not a single lesson during the inspection when pupils failed to apply themselves wholeheartedly to the work that they were asked to do. In all lessons, pupils have high levels of independence and show a real thirst for developing knowledge and understanding.

Outstanding achievement is also confirmed by pupils' recent successes in the common entrance examination and their entry to senior schools of their choice. The school is currently supporting its first cohort of Year 6 pupils. Of these, 73% have gained scholarships or awards to well-known public schools. Parents and carers are unanimous in their praise of the school and its teachers in supporting their children to achieve and consistently attain high standards. One parent described pupils' progress as 'amazing'.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

### Outstanding

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. They clearly enjoy school and show very strong attitudes towards learning. They are sociable and respectful to one another and demonstrate good awareness of moral issues. As a result, there is an exceptionally happy atmosphere evident throughout the school. Parents and carers describe the school as 'a large, happy family', and this is demonstrated in all classes. High levels of attendance confirm pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils state that instances of unacceptable behaviour are rare and that they understand any negative behaviour will be dealt with promptly by staff. The school's written records confirm this and all behaviour policies are clearly implemented. This results in a very positive environment where each pupil is highly valued.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding. They are given extensive opportunities to reflect about themselves and others and they consistently show compassion and kindness to each other. Following discussion in a Nursery class, one child described their mum as 'the make-you-better lady'.

There are numerous examples of high-quality art and music which illustrate pupils' interpretations of all aspects of life and cultural awareness. For example, Year 4 produced some exceptional artwork based on their interpretations of Monet's work and pupils in Year 3 and 4 have investigated Islamic decorative patterns found in mosques following a recent visit.

Moral issues are considered in personal, social and health education (PSHE). For example, the topic, 'cheating in class – would you report a friend?' has been explored. Year 5 and 6 pupils have

considered civil issues and devised their own '10 rules of the world', including incisive proposals such as, 'no more world wars,' and 'no doubting other people's religions'. Pupils' social development is excellent. They work extremely well together and have an excellent knowledge and conscience about the wider community.

The school council is active and has a very positive impact. Many of its suggestions have been accepted and adopted within the school routine. One member of the school council holds the role of community and charity ambassador and the whole school works tirelessly to support many charities and takes part in extensive fundraising events to support those in need. For example, during the inspection, all pupils and staff contributed fully towards the school's Comic Relief day activities and there was a buzz of excitement throughout the school. Pupils clearly had fun but also showed an impressive, mature understanding of the moral issues behind the fundraising events.

Cultural development is excellent and the wide range of faiths held by pupils in the school are fully recognised and respected. Pupils learn about political issues by visits from local officials such as councillors and police officers, and have visited local mosques and synagogues to support their religious understanding. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrated strong linguistic skills by recently performing a play in French. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are currently exploring the topic, 'people who help us', and have enjoyed visits from the fire service, a police community support officer, a nurse and a dentist. Such activity helps pupils gain a good understanding of public institutions and civic life in the world at large. The extensive range of trips to places of interest and visitors to the school play a very significant role in pupils' cultural education.

### Quality of teaching

### Outstanding

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan lessons carefully and in detail to ensure each pupil is sufficiently challenged and interested. Lessons are extremely well paced and support staff work very effectively to ensure that every pupil remains engaged and able to participate. Teachers have exceptional subject knowledge and show strong commitment towards providing lessons which capture pupils' imagination. One outstanding example was a fast-paced Year 6 geography lesson on earthquakes. The teacher encouraged a lively debate about the interpretation of seismic wave records and then asked pupils to build their own seismographs. Likewise, in a numeracy lesson for younger pupils, the teacher provided helpful support as pupils added and subtracted backwards from the total.

Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage adopt highly creative teaching methods which clearly capture children's interests and enthusiasm for learning and are based on children's developing skills and knowledge. For example, while washing hands after a painting activity a child noted the water had changed to a green colour and described this as 'a dinosaur swamp.' Teachers followed the child's interests and provided relevant resources to enable this creativity to continue. Children's learning is planned for effectively, both inside and outside, although the school has rightly prioritised increasing children's continuous access to the outdoor learning environment.

Assessment procedures are used well to track the progress of every pupil. Teachers clearly understand each pupil's targets and adapt lessons and activities appropriately to ensure each pupil consistently makes progress. Pupils clearly understand how to improve their work as marking is detailed and helpful. This encourages pupils to consistently try their best and maintain high standards.

### Quality of curriculum

### Outstanding

The curriculum is outstanding. It is rich, very broad and covers all of the required areas of learning. There are regular inter-house competitions for pupils from Reception to Year 6 in a

number of topics including sports, science and mathematics. Design and technology is successfully integrated into other subjects, as is information and communication technology (ICT). Inspectors saw many examples of ICT used to support topics in history and geography for research as well as word processing. Teachers and pupils use interactive whiteboards very efficiently to strengthen the curriculum by making film, photographs and other material available.

Pupils are very talented artists, actors and musicians. Drama is a very big part of the school's activities, and there are regular productions, concerts and performances for parents and carers. Pupils regularly represent the school at the local drama festival and the school participates in the Brighton and Hove Children's Parade. The school calendar confirms all pupils from Reception to Year 6 frequently undertake visits outside of the school to enhance their learning. For example, recent visits have included outings to farms, art galleries, museums and Newhaven Fort. Year 3 recently visited Fishbourne Roman Palace linked to their work about invaders into Britain. Pupils attended an opera workshop at Glyndebourne and older pupils undertake an annual camping trip. The extensive extra-curricular activities also contribute highly effectively towards supporting pupils' learning and broadening their experiences. For example, pupils in the choir recently participated at one of the world's largest school choir events at the O2 arena in London.

Personal and social education is taught very effectively and covers a broad range of topics which relate well to the interests of pupils. Examples include the moral and practical implications of giving money to people, and the use of animals for testing medicines used by humans. Pupils contributed vociferously to the debate on both these issues.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

### **Outstanding**

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. All regulatory requirements are met and all welfare requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage are also met. Safeguarding arrangements are given the highest priority and all staff have completed relevant child protection training. Rigorous recruitment checks ensure the safety and suitability of all staff and others who come into contact with children. The single central register contains all of the required employment information. Comprehensive health and safety policies, including the anti-bullying policy, are detailed and all guidance is implemented effectively. Written procedures clearly demonstrate the school's strong commitment towards keeping pupils safe and secure. Staff are highly committed towards ensuring the welfare of each pupil and take stringent action to meet each pupil's needs effectively. The extended day provision and holiday club ensure pupils are consistently cared for by high-quality staff in a safe environment. Parents and carers praise the pastoral care shown to pupils. Many parents and carers expressed their gratitude for the way in which staff really care about their children and provide a very safe and nurturing environment for them. Pupils also confirmed to inspectors how much they enjoy school and feel safe.

### **Leadership and management**

### **Outstanding**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The joint proprietors work relentlessly to pursue excellence in all areas and to maintain high-quality teaching and exceptional achievement for all pupils. They take an active part in the teaching programme and continuously review and adapt the curriculum to ensure it offers extensive opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. All areas of development from the last inspection have been met in full. The proprietors consistently review their practice and monitor provision to ensure teachers deliver the high standards that they expect. As a result, all independent school standards are met. Many parents and carers praised the high levels of staff retention and the positive impact this has on securing consistently high-quality teaching. The vast majority of staff questionnaires confirmed how much staff enjoy working at the school and acknowledge the strong leadership and management. The very few less positive comments related to issues regarding professional development opportunities for staff. However, this does not inhibit the outstanding levels of teaching observed throughout the school and endorses staff's strong commitment to continuous professional development.

Significant investment is made in the school to ensure pupils benefit from high-quality resources to support their learning. The school has rightly prioritised reviewing the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils' continuous access to the outdoor learning environment. Scrupulous plans are already being implemented to address this. The school's premises and accommodation are maintained well and provide a strong foundation to support the school's curriculum. The school meets all of the requirements related to the provision of information to parents, carers and others, and the complaints procedure meets all regulations.

The school meticulously tracks the academic achievements of every pupil so that at any time, teachers, parents and carers know how well a child is doing. Proprietors know how successful the school is in Year 6 at gaining places and scholarships at senior schools and how well the achievements of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage compare with those of other children nationally. However, it is not always possible to measure pupils' rates of progress each year relative to their abilities when they start at school and how these rates compare to national expectations. Although it can be argued that this omission does not matter because outcomes for pupils are outstanding, the ability to analyse in this way is a useful tool to ensure that future standards do not slip.

## What inspection judgements mean

| School  |             |   |
|---------|-------------|---|
| Grade   | Judgement   | Description   |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements. |
| Grade 2 | Good        | A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.                      |
| Grade 3 | Adequate    | A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.        |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate  | A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.        |



## School details

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 114641   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 408713   |
| <b>DfE registration number</b> | 846/6007 |

This inspection was carried out 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.

|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Nursery and Preparatory          |
| <b>School status</b>                       | Independent School               |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 6 months–11 years                |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                            |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 214                              |
| <b>Number of part-time pupils</b>          | 103                              |
| <b>Proprietors</b>                         | Nicola Gane and Liza Clark-Darby |
| <b>Headteachers</b>                        | Nicola Gane and Liza Clark-Darby |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 18 November 2009                 |
| <b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>            | £6,300                           |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01273 418984                     |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01273 415543                     |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | info@deepdeneschool.com          |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

