

Dania School

3 Corners Centre, Northampton Road, London, EC1R 0HU

Inspection dates

30 April–2 May 2014

Overall effectiveness

Achievement of pupils

Quality of teaching

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Requires improvement

Requires improvement

Good

Requires improvement

3

3

3

2

3

Summary of key findings

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement. Some do not achieve as well as they could as they are not clear about what they are expected to learn and how to improve their work.
- Teaching is not consistently good because teachers' planning does not ensure that work is at the right level to meet the different needs of individuals or groups of pupils.
- Pupils do not always make as much progress as they could because planned activities do not build on their prior learning in an effective way.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is not followed well enough to ensure there is good learning and development for the youngest children.
- Leaders have not developed clear systems for checking effectively on the work of the school.
- The proprietor and trustees do not provide sufficient challenge in making sure that teachers' appraisals are firmly linked to pupils' achievement and rates of progress. They have not ensured that teaching and achievement are good.

The school has the following strengths

- The proprietor and trustees have ensured that all the independent school standards are met, including the requirements for pupils' welfare, health and safety and safeguarding.
- The behaviour of the pupils is good with a strong emphasis on their personal development.
- The school's location provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their skills in the outdoor provision.
- Relationships are very strong and pupils and their parents agree that the school is helping to improve their learning.
- The proprietor, trustees, headteacher and all staff are committed to the school and its future development.
- More-able pupils make better progress than others, particularly in reading and speaking in both English and Danish.

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

- The inspector observed eight lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were joint observations with the headteacher, proprietor and trustees, and listened to a sample of pupils reading.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, looked at a wide range of their work and examined the school's data on achievement and progress.
- Meetings were held with the trustees, the proprietor, senior leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector considered seven responses to the Parent View Survey and spoke to parents during the school day.
- The inspector considered the responses to the questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at the documents that relate to the Independent School Standards.

Inspection team

Sandra Teacher, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dania School is a non-selective, co-educational independent day school. It is registered for pupils aged from four to seven years of age. It currently accepts pupils aged from four to nine years of age from a Danish or English background. It was registered in July 2013 and opened in September 2013.
- The school's work is based on the educational philosophy of Grundtvig, the founder of modern Danish education. The school caters for bilingual pupils, especially those arriving from Denmark with little or no English. In Denmark, formal schooling does not begin until seven years of age and pupils arriving from Denmark are placed according to ability rather than age. Some pupils have received no formal education prior to starting at Dania School.
- There are currently seven pupils on roll, with three boys and four girls aged from five to eight years of age. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- No pupils are in receipt of additional funding.
- This is the school's first inspection.
- The school has requested that this inspection incorporates a material change to increase the age of pupils admitted from five to seven to three to 11 years of age.
- Dania School is situated on the ground floor of a new two-storey building with open learning spaces, a music room and a classroom that can be used as a dance studio.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so as to raise pupils' levels of achievement and rates of progress by:
 - making sure that all pupils know what they are expected to learn and how to improve their work
 - ensuring teachers gather and use assessment information well to plan learning at the right level which meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils
 - ensuring that the planned activities enable pupils to build effectively on their previous learning
 - ensuring teaching assistants have the skills to help all groups of pupils including the more able.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing systems for checking on the work of the school, including the quality of teaching and learning, so that clear plans for the future can be devised based on an accurate view of how well the school is doing
 - ensuring plans for all subjects and areas of learning are clear how learning will develop year-on-year
 - ensuring there are sufficient resources and that staff are fully trained to meet all the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - ensuring there is suitable support for those pupils who find learning more difficult, including support to develop their reading skills
 - developing systems for staff appraisal which provide sufficient challenge and are firmly linked to pupils' achievement and rates of progress.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because teaching is not yet strong enough to ensure that all pupils can make good progress in their learning, especially in English and mathematics and the curriculum is not yet fully developed to meet the needs of all abilities and ages.
- Some planning for meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage is not fully developed, but this does not have a significant adverse impact on children's academic and personal development, and children are working within expected levels. As in the Danish system assessment takes place at the end of each year, there is a limited picture of the progress and achievement of each child in each of the areas of learning.
- Pupils who have been at the school since its inception, and the more able, are making better progress in mathematics and English. However, as all pupils are usually expected to do the same work, some younger pupils, and older pupils who find learning more difficult, are not always able keep up, and so do not achieve as well as they could. The support provided for these pupils is not as good as it could be.
- Pupils learn to read and write in both English and Danish. The more-able pupils read well in both languages, but some teachers and support staff need additional training in teaching either English or Danish as an additional language to ensure that all pupils can make the best possible progress.
- More-able pupils write simple sentences and about the stories they have been told, for example *The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep*, while those pupils who are at an early stage of emergent writing illustrate the few words in their books.
- Pupils' knowledge of some subjects and areas is good, and they can speak at length about some topics related to their personal interests. For example, they know about the place of earth within space and the galaxy.
- In following the Danish system, there is little recorded work, and where recorded work is available, the marking includes praise even if mistakes are made. Feedback is given verbally. In discussions with pupils, they were able to talk about their work and what they have learnt.

Quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is too variable in quality to enable all pupils, including children in the early years setting, to make good progress in all areas of learning.
- The most able are helped to read fluently, but a small minority struggle with basic letters and sounds, and not all staff have the required expertise to help the pupils move forward at a faster rate.
- Pupils gain a love of books and reading, and are surrounded with books in both languages. Adults read stories regularly to them and during lunchtimes, pupils listen to audio books. Parents are encouraged to support their children with enjoyment and developing reading skills.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to practise their handwriting skills, and often writing is taught alongside reading, when pupils copy out the words they have learnt and write their own stories forming sentences making use of these words.
- Work is recorded in mathematics books following a specific scheme and, although the more-able pupils learn numeracy skills well, both younger and older less-able pupils are often set tasks that are too difficult for them, especially in mathematics.
- While commercial plans are used for teaching English and mathematics, in some subject areas, particularly in science, and design and technology, planning does not make it fully clear how learning will develop year-on-year.
- A high adult-to-pupil ratio ensures pupils can receive individual help and support. In most subjects, there are opportunities to practise speaking and listening in both English and Danish,

and most pupils are making good progress in their speaking skills.

- Teaching assistants provide good care, and often one-to-one support, but their limited teaching skills do not enable them to support higher-order learning in literacy and numeracy.
- The planned curriculum for both Key Stages 1 and 2, covers all the required areas of learning, with a particular emphasis on physical development. The pupils have regular opportunities to play and explore in the outdoor environment. Outdoor learning includes vegetable gardening, rainwater collection, climbing and outdoor cooking. For example, an exciting session on bread-making was observed where pupils demonstrated considerable enjoyment when kneading the dough and designing their gingerbread men. Although they knew that yeast is a fungus and helps the dough to rise, there were missed opportunities to promote further their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Learning is good when teachers and other adults have high expectations about what each pupil will learn. For example, in a Danish language lesson, pupils were practising words in Danish that began with the letter 'V'. Occasionally, both teachers and support staff expect too little from pupils, for example they are sometimes too quick in helping pupils rather than allowing them time to seek to solve problems or answer questions by themselves.
- Good use is made of teachers' subject knowledge, particularly from the bilingual staff. Information and communication technology is used regularly to help the pupils to learn well and stimulate learning, particularly as a research tool to enable pupils to follow their own interests and ideas. However, as pupils' achievements have not been formally assessed, teachers' plans for future learning are not well developed.
- There are suitable resources to support teaching and learning appropriately, although the early years provision for sand, water and creative areas is not well developed, which limits opportunities for children to learn through play.
- Personal, social and health education is integrated into lessons. Pupils learn about their family tree and pupils talked about the variety of families in the school so that they were learning to understand and accept differences. One pupil said, 'Just so long as we love each other, it's fine.' Pupils' cultural development is promoted, for example, through learning about where each pupil's family came from and pupils drew pictures of traditional costumes from their place of origin. However, there is little learning about different religious traditions.
- Arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress over time are in line with the Danish system of 'Goals', which involves meeting a set of criteria over a period of a year. Pupils' abilities are assessed when they join the school, but records of achievement over the two terms since the school opened are limited. Teachers gather and use too little information from assessments to ensure that work is set at the right level for all pupils, especially the less able.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their enjoyment of school is evident and pupils indicate that they are happy and safe at the school. Parents, staff and trustees agree and one parent wrote about the school, stating, 'It has been a life saver for my child. I am so pleased.'
- When minor conflicts arise, pupils are usually expected to resolve them by themselves, and they visit the 'Peace Area' to discuss their feelings with each other and to come to an amicable settlement. This procedure proves to be successful.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is at the heart of the school's work and is very strong. Each pupil is expected to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem, for example through performance and drama, and this gives them a sense of purpose and responsibility. They sang outside a bakery when dressed as angels at Christmas, and wrote and performed their own plays for their parents.
- Pupils know how they are expected to behave and can explain what the 'High Five' promise means, which is about ensuring there are good relationships and respect for all.
- The school's work to safeguard the pupils is good. All the required standards for safeguarding are met, and during the inspection, a fire drill took place which followed the correct procedures

and ensured the pupils were evacuated promptly and safely.

- Pupils learn about people less fortunate than themselves, and raise money for charity and make 'cookies' for homeless people according to the Danish tradition.
- The school's emphasis is based on learning, especially about Danish culture and traditions, and the school is developing ways to provide further opportunities to explore both British and other cultures and ways of life. For example, they have had visits from the Police and Fire Service.
- The staff handbook makes it clear and requires that staff take care to avoid any partisan views, for example when talking about what is happening in the world today.

Leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because systems are still new and have not yet been fully implemented to secure good teaching and progress. However, all involved in the leadership of the school show passion, commitment and drive to improve the school, but do not have a fully clear view of the school's strengths and areas in need of development so that suitable plans for the future can be created.
- The headteacher, senior teacher and teaching assistants work closely together, but leaders and the proprietor have not fully established a formal system of checks on the quality of teaching and learning, using data on school performance, and for appraising teachers' work, including tackling any underperformance, and the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement.
- Much work has been undertaken in setting up the school and in ensuring that all the independent school regulations are met, with priority being given to the premises and accommodation, the welfare, health and safety of the pupils and their personal development.
- The school is aware that its focus now needs to be in securing all pupils' good achievement in literacy and numeracy through improving the quality of teaching with better staff training, particularly in implementing the requirements of the early years framework and in providing more support for pupils who learn more slowly.
- A system of middle management has not been created as the number of staff and pupils on roll is small.
- The school's strong set of values promotes good inclusion and is ensuring stronger equality of opportunity, and has established a link with a local outstanding primary school with plans for it to offer a mentoring programme to improve and develop the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate
<p>Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the <i>Non-association independent school inspection handbook</i> which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.</p>	

School details

Unique reference number	139973
Inspection number	443022
DfE registration number	206/6000

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.

Type of school	Nursery and Primary
School status	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	3–11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Proprietor	Eva Papesch
Chair	Eva Papesch
Headteacher	Joanne Lo
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,000
Telephone number	02072786510
Fax number	N/A
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