

Deepdene School

195 New Church Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 4ED

Inspection dates

6–8 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- School leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards relating to welfare, health and safety have been met. They have not followed the guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding safeguarding.
- The governance of the school is ineffective. There are no suitable arrangements for holding leaders and teachers to account for maintaining a high-quality education.
- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Not all teaching ensures that pupils make the progress of which they are capable, particularly the most able.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare require improvement. A few pupils do not behave considerately towards each other.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. When not directed by adults, pupils do not always concentrate well.
- Outcomes for pupils require improvement. Not enough pupils make good progress, particularly in mathematics.
- The early years provision requires improvement. Children do not make enough progress from their high starting points and do not make enough gains across all the areas of learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Changes introduced by the headteacher are beginning to lead to improvements in teaching and in the assessment of pupils' progress.
- Pupils are able to study a broad range of subjects. They benefit from many extra-curricular opportunities, including sports and cultural events.
- The extra help provided for pupils who may have fallen behind is highly effective and enables them to catch up.
- Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants work together with dedication, energy and commitment.
- Pupils are happy and feel secure. They enjoy school, attend well and gain self-assurance in their time at the school.
- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. Some pupils gain scholarships to selective independent schools.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership, management and governance of the school by ensuring that:
 - safeguarding policies and staff training are up to date and in line with statutory requirements
 - safeguarding information and concerns are meticulously recorded
 - pupils' progress is tracked accurately from their starting points and from year to year
 - teachers and teaching assistants are set challenging targets linked to pupils' progress
 - leaders are held to account for maintaining a high quality of education and meeting the independent school standards.

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - providing all pupils, including the most able, with challenging work that builds upon their previous learning
 - making sure that pupils are as productive and work as hard in all their subjects as they do in English
 - ensuring that the teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 1 prepares pupils well for Key Stage 2.

- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - insisting that pupils settle promptly to changes in activity and that they move around the school quietly and with consideration
 - threading values of tolerance, respect and courtesy more explicitly through every aspect of the school's work
 - instilling better listening skills and turn-taking habits in all pupils when they are working together or having discussions.

- Increase rates of pupils' progress by:
 - checking that there is sufficient progression in skills and topics from one year to the next, so that pupils achieve well at every stage in their time at the school
 - making sure that pupils have the opportunity to write deeper extended responses in subjects such as science and religious education, making full use of the skills they have acquired in literacy.

- Increase children's rates of progress in the early years by:
 - tracking children's progress across all the areas of learning more closely
 - ensuring that all children participate purposefully in outdoor activities
 - making the most of opportunities to extend children's language skills and communication
 - insisting that children acquire good learning habits, such as sitting well, listening carefully and cooperating with each other.

- The school must meet the following independent school standards:
 - The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
 - The proprietor must ensure that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person's appointment (paragraph 18(2)(d)).
 - The proprietor must ensure that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils and accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility (paragraph 24(1), 24(1) (a) and paragraph 24(1)(b)).
 - The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school

standards are met consistently; and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1), 34(1) (a), 34(1) (b), 34(1) (c)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- School leaders and the proprietors have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. There are serious shortfalls in the school's safeguarding procedures and practices. At the start of the inspection, leaders were unable to provide the single central record which shows the school's statutory checks on the suitability of staff.
- The school's safeguarding policy is not up to date as required and does not follow guidance from the Secretary of State. Recent statutory documents were not referenced in the policy and staff had not received up-to-date training in line with the guidance.
- Record keeping and procedures for safeguarding pupils do not meet requirements. Information about pupils who may be at risk of harm is not kept securely and actions taken to protect them, including responses from the local authority, are not recorded in the necessary detail. School leaders have not always put the welfare of the child first, when dealing with a safeguarding concern.
- School leaders have not ensured that there is a dedicated area for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils. If pupils become ill or hurt during the school day, they often have to wait in the school reception area or lie down in an available classroom. The current arrangements do not meet the independent school standards.
- Arrangements for holding the school to account for its work, including ensuring that the independent school standards are met, are not effective. The proprietors and headteachers govern the school themselves, and no one is overseeing the school's work objectively.
- School leaders' evaluation of the school is over-generous and not based on close and accurate analysis of pupils' progress or the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Teachers' performance is not managed effectively. Teachers and leaders have not been set targets in order to improve their work and, where appropriate, earn pay increases. Teaching assistants are not set targets and their work is not formally monitored by leaders.
- The headteacher has introduced some initiatives which have been welcomed by staff, including a new leadership structure, a calendar of assessments to track pupils' progress more carefully and training for teachers and teaching assistants. Lesson planning for different subjects is now formalised and a new marking policy is beginning to yield improvements, particularly in pupils' writing and grammatical knowledge. However, it is too soon to gauge the full impact of these changes.
- School leaders are committed to providing a wide range of subjects and activities to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education. Pupils benefit from studying music, dance, art and languages, including Latin. Participation in sports is given a high priority. Leaders have made sure that pupils learn about democracy and the British political system. Religious education lessons include study of some different faiths. However, pupils' deeper understanding of different cultures is limited because they have not been encouraged to link different beliefs to their own values and those of the school.
- School leaders are energetic and passionate about education. They have made a considerable personal investment in the school and are determined to make improvements. The headteacher has forged some productive links with other schools and encouraged staff to share good practice. Teachers and teaching assistants told inspectors that they appreciate the changes being made and feel supported by school leaders. Staff in the school are a committed workforce dedicated to the pupils.
- As soon as inspectors identified unmet independent school standards, school leaders took swift action to make improvements. They quickly set up the single central record and made some initial changes to the safeguarding policy.
- Many parents love the school and are happy that their children feel safe and are learning well. Some parents are very pleased with the progress their children are making, the quality of communication and the caring ethos of the school. However, a small number of parents expressed concerns about the changes to leadership and staffing and the school's response to the concerns they raise.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The school is led and managed by the headteachers and the proprietors. There is no governing body. The headteacher of the school and the headteacher of the Nursery oversee each other's work. The headteachers and proprietors were unaware of some of their statutory duties. As a result, governance has been inadequate: the quality of education in the school is not as high as it should be and there are several unmet independent school standards.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Teaching is not consistently good. Pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable because some tasks are too easy and do not build upon their ability or prior learning.
- The most-able pupils are sometimes left waiting for harder or more challenging work. Teachers' questioning does not challenge pupils enough to think deeply.
- Some teaching in Key Stage 1 is weaker than in Key Stage 2 and pupils' progress is slower. This is particularly the case in mathematics. Teachers' explanations are not always clear and some pupils have not acquired basic skills of measuring and estimating. Occasionally tasks are too easy and pupils do not concentrate well.
- There is better teaching, learning and assessment in Key Stage 2. Lessons are more carefully planned to take into account different abilities and well-chosen resources interest and sometimes inspire pupils. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly, with helpful feedback and effective use of the new colour-coding system, which encourages pupils to edit their work and learn from their mistakes. Pupils told inspectors that they like the new marking system because it helps them to know what they need to improve.
- Practical apparatus in mathematics is used well and enhances pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem solving. Challenging and inspiring English texts broaden pupils' experiences and prepare them for secondary school. In art, pupils develop their skills well and learn about a broad range of artists and techniques.
- Thematic days on the school calendar enable pupils to explore different topics and exercise their creative skills. For example, a project on the Stone Age completely captured pupils' imaginations and led to some exciting art work and accomplished creative writing.
- Pupils keep their work neat and tidy. Pupils want to please their teachers and do well in lessons. Attractive displays and resources in classrooms provide stimulating reminders for pupils and celebrate their best work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **requires improvement**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- School leaders and teachers keep pupils safe on a day-to-day basis because they possess detailed knowledge of each child and have close relationships with parents. Staff are alert to any changes in pupils and they make sure they follow up any concerns. As a result, pupils are safe and know that adults in the school are there to help them. However, school leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards related to welfare, health and safety are met. Staff have not had up-to-date training to enhance their commitment to safeguarding. This is why personal development and welfare require improvement.
- Pupils are able to talk about the school 'rules' and about how they should behave, but they are not clear what the school's overarching values are or how their education is developing them as people. Some teaching of principles, such as tolerance of difference and respect, does not do enough to promote pupils' deeper thinking about moral questions and their own values.
- A few parents expressed concerns that incidents of bullying were not managed effectively. However, during the inspection, pupils did not voice any concerns. They told inspectors that sometimes there is teasing, but they either sorted it out themselves or staff dealt with it well.
- Pupils are confident and curious. They are clearly well motivated and ambitious. Most are polite and friendly towards visitors and behave with respect and warmth towards their teachers. Many take on responsibilities in the school and make it their business to help and support younger pupils.
- A comprehensive programme of extra activities and clubs, including sports, drama, ballet and music, enhances pupils' cultural development. They enjoy presenting and performing and taking part in charitable events.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When not directed by teachers a few pupils lose concentration and drift off, becoming inattentive. Some

pupils do not work together well: sometimes they find it difficult to listen and take turns to speak.

- When travelling around the school and during breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils do not always move quietly and occasionally there is squabbling. They sometimes take too long to settle when changing activity.
- The majority of pupils respond quickly to reminders from staff. School leaders can point to particular cases where some pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have greatly improved because of the extra support they are given. Pupils enjoy earning house points and are rightly proud of the rewards they gain for good work and conduct.
- Pupils attend well. Rates of absence are low and the school takes firm action to discourage parents from taking holidays in term time.
- When the teaching is effective and when the teacher keeps a watchful eye for inattention, pupils behave well, enjoy contributing to lessons and doing their very best.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- School leaders are not able to demonstrate how well pupils are doing because until recently there has not been a reliable and accurate system to measure progress from their starting points. The school's new assessment system is in its infancy and school leaders' assertions about pupils' progress were not borne out by the evidence seen during the inspection. Some parents rightly expressed concerns that they did not receive enough precise information about how much progress their children were making.
- Pupils do not all make the progress of which they are capable in English and mathematics. Most pupils make just the progress expected, when compared with national figures. Not enough of the most-able pupils excel, given their higher-than-average starting points.
- From year to year, pupils do not all make good gains in their learning because expectations of what they can achieve in Key Stage 1 are too low. School leaders have correctly identified that in particular, pupils in the younger year groups do not progress well enough in mathematics.
- While pupils of all ages study a wide range of subjects, they are not as productive as they should be. For example, the standard of pupils' work in geography, religious education or science does not compare well with what they achieve in literacy. Some pieces of work remain unfinished or are very minimally recorded, with little comment or assessment from the teacher, indicating that learning is superficial.
- Pupils read fluently and enjoy reading aloud and presenting. Younger pupils read to an adult on a daily basis. Although the school has no dedicated library space, pupils visit the public library regularly and classrooms are well stocked with fiction and non-fiction. However, some younger pupils' knowledge of basic grammar is not completely secure. The school has recently introduced a new method for teaching phonics (sounds that letters make) but it is too soon to measure the impact.
- There are better outcomes in English in the upper Key Stage 2 years. Pupils read and write with fluency, concentration and enjoyment. School leaders have correctly identified weaknesses in pupils' knowledge of grammar and are rightly tackling this in all year groups, under the effective guidance of the deputy headteacher.
- As a result of specific extra help and intervention, the very few pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language make progress to enable them to catch up. Parents made a point of telling inspectors how much they appreciate the extra help their children receive if they are struggling.
- Pupils acquire a wide range of experience and knowledge through the extended day, specific themed projects and in subjects such as art and history, where expectations of what they can achieve are high. Pupils also benefit from the early study of a second foreign language and are making good progress in both Spanish and French.
- Pupils' sporting and artistic achievements are strong. Opportunities for team games, regular fixtures with partner schools and participation in local cultural events abound and enable participating pupils to be challenged, self-assured and confident.
- Pupils acquire solid homework habits to prepare them for moving to secondary education. The school prepares pupils well for entrance examinations to selective independent schools. Some pupils do exceptionally well and are awarded academic scholarships and bursaries. In this way, the older pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- School leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards are met. Shortfalls in the school's safeguarding procedures have the potential to put children at risk because staff have not received up-to-date guidance.
- Most children enter the Reception class having already reached age-related expectations, but some children's progress stalls because not enough account is taken of what they can already understand and do. There are not enough opportunities for linking practice in phonics with other activities, which limits children's progress. Not all adults extend children's vocabulary or respond dynamically to children's learning through questions and conversations.
- Leaders of the early years do not assess children's development in all the different areas of learning closely or frequently enough. Not all children are sufficiently productive or focused when learning or playing in the outdoor areas.
- A few children struggle to take turns, sit quietly and sustain their concentration.
- Children are happy and have good relationships with adults and each other. Leaders demonstrate detailed knowledge of individual pupils and what their next steps should be. Frequent communication with parents, including a well-attended reading workshop, fosters close relationships between the Reception class and families.
- Many children are making gains with their mathematical knowledge, persevering well with number activities and simple sums. Children also respond well to reading activities. Many are confident readers and are able to predict and describe cause and effect. Children demonstrate a high level of skill with early writing. As a result, they are well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	114641
Inspection number	10006844
DfE registration number	846/6007

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Pre-preparatory
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Elizabeth Brown Nicola Gane
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Elizabeth Brown
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7575
Telephone number	01273 418984
Website	www.deepdeneschool.com
Email address	info@deepdeneschool.com
Date of previous inspection	13–15 March 2013

Information about this school

- Deepdene is an independent pre-preparatory school for pupils aged four to 11. There is a linked Nursery provision in the same building. Both provisions are owned by the same proprietor. The Nursery provision was not inspected.
- The school aims to 'help children to become confident, competent, considerate and courteous individuals'.
- The number of pupils with special educational needs is very low, as is the number of pupils with English as an additional language. A few pupils are bilingual.
- The current headteacher took up her post in September 2014. The deputy headteacher joined the school in January 2015.
- The school is co-owned by the headteacher and the headteacher of the Nursery. Two other proprietors are related to the headteachers.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school was previously inspected in March 2013.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice. The Department for Education commissioned Ofsted to carry out this inspection earlier than planned in the inspection cycle because of two complaints made about the school which raised concerns about leadership and management and staff changes. The complaints were considered as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons, two of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. A number of shorter visits to lessons were made, some of which were accompanied by the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, a group of teachers and groups of pupils. An inspector listened to some pupils read.
- An inspector spoke to 10 parents at the school gate. The inspection team received three letters from parents. They also took into account the 73 responses to Parent View. Many parents wrote comments, which were also considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documentation related to the independent school standards was reviewed, including statutory policies and records relating to safeguarding. Documents and planning related to assessment, pupils' progress and the curriculum were evaluated. In addition, inspectors toured the school in order to check areas against the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Abigail Wilkinson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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