

Deepdene School

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

Inspection dates

6 July 2016

Overall outcome

Independent school standards met

Context of the inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to evaluate the school's response to the recent inspection under section 109 of the Education Act 2008.
- The inspector evaluated the extent to which aspects of the independent schools standards judged to be unmet at the previous inspection are now met.
- The inspector examined the proprietors' work to ensure that all pupils are kept safe. He evaluated the extent to which the school promotes each pupil's well-being. The inspector assessed the arrangements in place to ensure that medical needs are met in the event that a pupil or pupils are taken ill on site.
- The inspection was unannounced. It was the first inspection since the school was judged to be inadequate in October 2015.
- The inspector met frequently with senior leaders. Two of the senior leadership team are also co-proprietors of the school. The inspector also met with the company secretary, who is also the school's business manager.
- The inspector took account of largely historic responses to Parent View, Ofsted's confidential online survey.
- The co-proprietors led the inspector on an extended tour of the school.
- The inspector met with the deputy headteacher and the subject leader for mathematics.
- The inspector observed learning in all classes, including the nursery and watched part of a Year 3 mathematics lesson.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of the school's documents, including its single central record of the checks it undertakes on adults wishing to work at or volunteer at the school.
- The inspector analysed with school leaders the outcomes of tests in English and mathematics administered by an external provider.

Main findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- The previous inspection found that the co-proprietors had not taken sufficient action to promote the safeguarding and well-being of children. The co-proprietors had not taken into account the most recent guidance on safeguarding provided by the Secretary of State.
- The co-proprietors have taken decisive action to address the shortcomings identified at the previous inspection. They have been ably supported in this activity by other directors of Deepdene Schools Limited, the joint owners of the provision.
- All leaders have committed to undertaking relevant and rigorous training in aspects of school leadership which had previously been missed. They are now able to exercise their duties skilfully and in a timely manner. Most notably, they have overhauled the arrangements for safeguarding which is now a strength of the school.
- The school's rewritten safeguarding policy is available on the website. The policy is now subject

to regular review and is to be updated further as statutory requirements change or new advice emerges centrally.

- Leaders have also updated the child protection and behaviour policies, which, with a few minor amendments, are now fit for purpose. All staff have contributed to an overarching atmosphere in the school which encourages pupils to behave extremely well.
- All staff have been trained in how to keep children safe in education. Staff have been trained to identify any pupils at risk of neglect, abuse, exploitation or radicalisation. Leaders plan to update all staff on safeguarding matters at the beginning of each year.
- The co-proprietors are committed to ensuring that new members of staff are inducted into the school's safeguarding arrangements before they begin working with pupils. Leaders provided evidence that many staff have undertaken voluntary additional training in 'e-safety' or training related to the 'Prevent' duty.
- Pupils are polite, articulate and very respectful of visitors. They increasingly exhibit very positive attitudes to learning and most behave well, even when teachers are working more directly with others in the class. There have been dramatic improvements in this aspect of the school's work since the previous inspection. Pupils continue to move around the school carefully and quietly, taking account of each other in the narrow corridors. They play happily outside and demonstrate good responses at lunchtime to the school's encouragement of good table manners.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- The previous inspection found that the co-proprietors had not recorded in a single register the checks they undertake on persons wishing to work at or volunteer in the school.
- The records leaders keep of the assiduous checks they make on adults wishing to work at or volunteer at the school are now well maintained. All visitors are challenged at the reception. All points of access to or exit from the site are secure.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- The previous inspection found that the co-proprietors had not made available, suitable accommodation or arrangements for pupils with medical needs.
- Leaders demonstrated the interim arrangements in place to cater for pupils taken ill on site. These are satisfactory as they would afford such pupils privacy, tranquillity, a comfortable place to lie down and access to suitable sanitary facilities. They also set out appropriate plans for enhanced and permanent arrangements in a redesigned classroom.
- The co-proprietors also provided sound evidence that staff are suitably trained to administer first aid or care should it be necessary.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- As the preceding requirements are now all met, the requirements for leadership and management are also met.
- In addition, the co-proprietors have sought external advice and guidance from experienced and expert consultants. Some of these are serving leaders in other independent schools. As a result, the co-proprietors are confident increasingly about the quality of their work and the overall performance of the school.
- The co-proprietors are sensibly in the process of establishing an external advisory board. They intend that this board shall be remitted to hold them to account for all aspects of the school's work. The board will be comprised of persons with sufficient expertise and experience to also provide support for the school in the next stage of its development.
- One of the co-proprietors acknowledged candidly that the outcome of the previous inspection was 'a wake-up call'. All recognise that leadership of the school had not always kept pace with the rapidly changing requirements of education in 21st-century England. Leaders at all levels have redoubled their efforts to ensure that the school rapidly returns to its previous highly regarded status locally.
- In particular, leaders have introduced a new system for assessing pupils' progress and

development. All teachers understand how to use this system. The system enables teachers to judge how well each child is doing against age-related expectations nationally in English and mathematics. They do so accurately.

- Leaders understand more clearly now the importance of comparing pupils' performance with similar pupils locally and all pupils nationally. They have also introduced, therefore, a standardised testing system which provides helpful comparative information. During the inspection, using outputs from this system, it became apparent that pupils currently in Year 6 at Deepdene perform at a considerably higher level than pupils of the same age in other schools. Rightly, the deputy headteacher is set to repeat this analysis for all other year groups.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements

Inspection team

Dr Simon Hughes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Deepdene School is an independent pre-preparatory school incorporating a nursery.
- Deepdene is co-owned by the headteacher and the headteacher of the nursery.
- Deepdene School is incorporated in the Department for Education Register of Independent Schools.
- Deepdene caters for the children of families mainly resident in Hove, East Sussex.
- Pupils are taught in classes with a maximum size of 18. Currently the school has vacancies in some year groups.
- Most pupils are from White British households. A few are from black and minority ethnic families and some speak English as an additional language.
- There are very few pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- The school was previously inspected in October 2015. The nursery was last inspected in July 2015.
- At the previous inspection the following standards were unmet: Part 3, 7, 7(a) 7(b), Part 4, 18(2)(d), Part 5, 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), Part 8, 34(1).
- Following the inspection, the co-proprietors submitted an action plan to the Department for Education. The plan was evaluated by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in February 2016. It was judged to be acceptable.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

School details

Unique reference number	114641
Inspection number	10018198
DfE registration number	846/6007

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Type of school	Pre-preparatory and nursery
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 months to 11 years of age
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Number of part time pupils	8
Proprietors	Nicola Gane, Elizabeth Brown
Chair	Nicola Gane
Headteacher	Elizabeth Brown
Date of previous school inspection	6–8 October 2015
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,252
Telephone number	01273 418984
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