

Old Vicarage School

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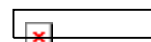
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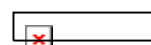
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Introduction and summary

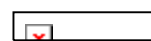


Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

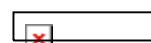
Information about the school



The Old Vicarage School is situated in a substantial Victorian building set in extensive and very well maintained grounds in Darley Abbey, a suburb of Derby. It caters for boys and girls of all aptitudes and abilities between the ages of three and eleven. At the time of the inspection there were 85 pupils on roll including one who attends on a part-time basis. Three pupils speak English as an additional language. Three pupils are identified as having special educational needs but no pupil has a formal statement of special educational need.

The school originally opened in 1933. The current principal and proprietor acquired it in September 2002. As a small school it aims 'to offer individual attention and an excellent learning environment that is sensitive to the needs of each student'.

Summary of main findings



The Old Vicarage School has many very good features and no significant weaknesses. The principal has fostered a distinctive and inclusive ethos. She is fully aware of what needs to be achieved next and the quality of her development planning is very good. The school is successful in educating pupils to a high standard. It offers a good curriculum that is well matched to the individual needs of the pupils. The quality of the teaching is good. Pupils are cared for very well.

What the school does well

- its pupils make good progress and attain high standards;
- it cares for its pupils very well and promotes their personal development successfully. The pupils are polite, their behaviour is exemplary and they enjoy being part of a small community; and
- it is very well staffed, accommodated and resourced.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations

- complete the procedures to confirm the suitability of staff as detailed in section 4 of this report;
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill; and
- provide an annual written report of the progress and attainment of each registered child in the main subject areas taught.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

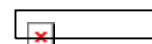
The school has a brief curriculum statement, 'How children learn', which sets out the principles upon which the curriculum is based. These are to ensure that pupils learn how to learn; to give each subject an appropriate amount of time; to keep an accurate record of each pupils' progress; and to introduce 'each child to a wide range of knowledge and skill based upon a sound moral foundation'. To a large extent, the curriculum reflects these principles

The curriculum is appropriate for each age group. It is broad and balanced and enables pupils to attain at least the standards expected nationally. All relevant subjects of the National Curriculum are taught together with French for the older pupils. Religious education is not taught although there are two acts of collective worship of a broadly Christian character each week. The curriculum provides appropriate opportunities for the pupils to be given experience in all the required areas of learning. Pupils in the kindergarten class are taught a curriculum that is defined in National Curriculum subject terms but which conforms to the nationally agreed Foundation Stage areas of learning.

There is a good emphasis of the development of the pupils' oral, literacy and numeracy skills. The pupils' information and communication technology skills are also promoted effectively through work across the curriculum. There is no structured programme of personal, social, and health education. It is the school's policy to address such issues through topic areas as and when appropriate for the pupils. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities including instrumental tuition. Pupils are well prepared for the roles and responsibilities of adult life. They are given good preparation for entrance examinations for selective secondary schools.

All subjects have policies and schemes of work linked to commercial textbooks or national guidelines. The generous staffing allows for some specialist teaching of science, information and communication technology, French, physical education and drama and for preparation for entrance examinations. Much of the work is specifically aimed at pupils' individual learning needs through a detailed process of target setting and homework. The principal provides additional teaching support to help individual pupils meet their learning targets. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need. The school is in operation for 334 sessions per year which is below the recommended minimum for maintained schools. There is sufficient teaching time. All but one pupil attend full-time and they are supervised well.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching was good or better in almost all lessons and never less than satisfactory. In about a third, the teaching was very good. This high quality teaching has a significant and positive influence on the successful work and life of the school.

Lessons are very carefully planned and materials are readily available. Classrooms are organised very thoughtfully and very good use is made of resources and all available space. The effective planning gives a clear structure to lessons and the tasks set engage pupils' interest. Pupils know the objectives of lessons and what is expected of them. As a result this helps them make good progress. Lessons get off to a brisk start and time is efficiently used throughout. All lessons have a clear sense of purpose and proceed at a good tempo. A good balance is maintained between direct teaching, practical and written tasks, and opportunities for pupils to talk to each other and the teacher about their work. When pupils work individually or as part of a group the teachers intervene very effectively to help pupils understand the work they are doing. Good clear feedback is a regular feature of lessons. A broad range of activities are provided in all classes. These are developed in considerable depth and detail. Teachers' introductions and explanations are clear and interesting, and they quickly capture and sustain pupils' attention. Teachers ask questions that challenge pupils and stimulate their interest and enquiry.

Very good relationships exist in all classes. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen and confident to answer questions, offer ideas and make suggestions. They work hard and get through a good amount of work.

Classroom assistants are carefully deployed and well briefed. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Classroom routines are firmly established, clearly understood and effectively followed by the pupils. Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive response and attitudes contribute greatly to their good rate of progress. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects and

topics they teach. In a number of subjects such as music, physical education, swimming, information and communication technology and science, pupils are taught by specialist teachers who have a high level of expertise.

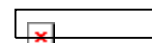
Arrangements for the assessment of pupils' work and progress are very good. A detailed and informative policy helps to ensure consistency in practices adopted across the school. Assessment of pupils is thorough and detailed. It effectively helps teachers to plan tasks. The key element is the identification of targets for individual pupils, mainly in English and mathematics. This ensures pupils are given precise tasks carefully matched to their needs. The clearly defined marking policy helps pupils make good progress. Pupils' work is marked regularly and constructive and sensitive comments encourage pupils to make progress and work hard. Appropriate rewards are consistently given. Teachers ask informal and perceptive questions, at different levels, to provoke pupils to think and to identify their varying degrees of understanding. This knowledge contributes to the setting of pupils' targets. The school uses standardised, national and school-based tests systematically to measure pupils' levels of attainment.

The identification of those pupils who need additional support is carefully undertaken by class teachers in the first instance. Although the school does not formally follow the national Code of Practice, individual education plans are very carefully and precisely drawn up. Clear and careful decisions are made about the nature and amount of support required. A judicious balance between classroom support and specialist additional help is achieved.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. The school's positive ethos and clearly set out aims and values contribute successfully to the pupils' spiritual development. Topics for assemblies support their spiritual growth and understanding. Opportunities are provided for pupils to listen, reflect, sing and pray. Each day starts promptly in a calm manner. In all the classes pupils are keen to take part in tasks and to offer ideas which are always valued by the teachers and other adults. This enables all members of the school community to feel a sense of belonging. In assemblies and through the curriculum pupils confirm their own values and those of society and different world faiths. In subjects such as science, art and geography, pupils learn to understand and appreciate the beauty, variety and mysteries of the natural world.

The school makes excellent provision for pupils' social and moral development. Relationships are good. All pupils relate to each other very well. Courtesy and caring for others are hallmarks of the school. The pupils have a clearly developed sense of right and wrong and what is fair. Behaviour both in and out of the school is excellent. Lunchtimes are civilised and calm occasions. Self-discipline is encouraged and pupils increasingly become independent and self-reliant. The school successfully develops pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence and self-knowledge. The good range of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' social development. Sanctions and rewards are made explicit and school rules have a positive impact on behaviour and personal development. Pupils are respectful of property and treat the buildings and each other with care and tolerance.

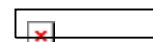
Provision for pupils' cultural development is effectively developed through the curriculum and a variety of experiences and activities. Pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures, traditions and beliefs is developed through work in art, French, history, geography and music. Important religious festivals are acknowledged and discussion of the appropriate artefacts and literature is provided. In recent assemblies pupils' awareness was broadened and deepened about Christianity,

Islam, Buddhism and Judaism. The school sees the importance of making pupils aware of the cultural diversity within the world around them.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school gives very high priority to the health, safety and welfare of its pupils and staff and meets all the requirements for registration.

The school's ethos is clearly focused on the quality of relationships and the development of good behaviour based on mutual respect. It is an effectively ordered community with very clearly established and appropriate routines. Pupils are well known by the staff and are secure and confident in their teacher's care. The school has responded positively to all recent legislation regarding bullying and behaviour.

The detailed behaviour policy indicates a strong determination to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour amongst pupils. The use of minor sanctions is rare and any incidents are carefully logged. Movement around the school is safe and orderly. Pupils are closely supervised at all times including play and lunch times, particularly on their weekly visits to the local swimming pool. Appropriate arrangements are in place when there is inclement weather. Attendance and punctuality are good and attendance and admission registers are administered in line with regulations

A comprehensive range of good quality policies inform staff and help them to support their actions. Discussions with pupils show that they feel secure and confident and know that they can turn to a number of adults if they need comfort or help. There is a detailed and appropriate child protection policy in place and the principal is the designated member of staff. She co-ordinates any necessary action and liaises with outside agencies.

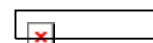
The school's health and safety policy is comprehensive and includes the requirement for regular and routine risk assessments over a number of aspects of school life including physical education and visits out of school. Regular fire drills take place and fire regulations are carefully observed. All fire fighting appliances are checked regularly. There have been no alterations to the building since the last fire officer's report in 1999 when it was considered satisfactory.

The school has completed an audit of accessibility and has drawn up an action plan to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The most recent appointments meet the requirements of the regulations in full. Appropriate checks

were made with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and to confirm the identity, medical fitness, employment history, character references and qualifications of new members of staff. However, such checks have not yet been carried out on all members of staff. The school is actively seeking to remedy this situation.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

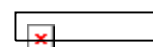
No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that prior to the confirmation of their appointment, all staff at the school have been subject to a check with the CRB to confirm their suitability to work with children (paragraph 4(b)); and
- ensure that prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and that such information is taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).
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5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school is accommodated on the ground floor of a Victorian vicarage and provides very good accommodation for its pupils. It meets almost all the registration requirements relating to premises and accommodation. Currently facilities for those pupils who are ill do not fully meet requirements.

Set in spacious and interesting grounds, the building provides sufficient accommodation for the current numbers on roll. All classrooms are bright and sufficiently large to allow a broad range of activities to be provided. The accommodation contributes significantly to the quality of teaching and learning; a positive and calm atmosphere is created that encourages pupils to learn.

The building is immaculately clean and very well furnished and decorated. Both inside and out the accommodation and grounds are very well maintained and of very good quality. Attractive and interesting displays of artefacts, pictures and pupils' work in classrooms and around the school reflect and celebrate the pupils' achievements and also stimulate further study.

The former coach house provides good additional accommodation and is often used for nursery activities, assemblies, drama, physical education and gymnastics. Specialist accommodation for information and communication technology, music, and the library are used well. The provision of toilets and wash basins is good. A large, attractive and carefully furnished and organised conservatory is well used for a wide range of activities and events.

Outside facilities are good. The hard play area is of sufficient size to provide opportunities for a range of imaginative activities at break time. In addition the extensive and well kept garden area provides good opportunities for recreational activities as well as organised games including tennis, netball, hockey and football.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

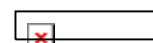
The school meets all the requirements except one.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (Paragraph 5 (I)).

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school meets nearly all the regulations in respect to the information provided for parents. Prospective parents are given a useful folder of information about the school and its proprietor and the curriculum and various policies in place. There is regular and frequent contact between parents and carers, and the principal and teachers at the beginning and end of the school day. A very large majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire reported that they were happy with the information they receive from the school and feel welcome there.

The school provides a written leaving report on each pupil at the end of Year 6. This contains information on the pupil's progress and attainment in each subject taught and his/her results in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests. The report also details the pupil's contributions to school life. It is an attractive and useful document. The parents of pupils in Year 2 are given a brief indication of their child's performance in the end of Key Stage 1 national tests. Other pupils are not issued with reports. The regular contact between home and school through target setting, homework diaries and reading records ensure that parents have a good level of information about their child's progress.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

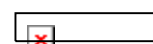
The school meets all the requirements except one.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- provide parents with an annual written report of the progress and attainment of each registered child in the main subject areas taught (paragraph 6 (5)).

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints



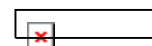
The school has a clear and succinct complaints procedure that meets the requirements in all respects. It allows for a complaint to be made and considered on an informal basis initially and there are appropriate formal procedures in place to ensure that complaints are considered objectively. The policy is available to parents on request. The headteacher reports that the formal stages have

never needed to be invoked.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	Old Vicarage School		
DfES ref number:	831/6002		
Type of school:	Preparatory		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	3-11 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 50,	Girls 34,	Total 84
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 0,	Girls 1,	Total 1
Annual fees (day pupils):	£1,595		
Annual fees (boarders):	N/A		
Address of school:	11 Church Lane		
	Darley Abbey		
	Derby		
	Derbyshire DE22 1EW		
Telephone number:	01332 557130		
Headteacher:	Mrs S McLean		
Proprietor:	Mrs S McLean		
Lead Inspector:	Mr I Rodger		
Dates of inspection:	24 - 27 January 2005		

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